Si vis Pacem, para bellum, If You Want Peace, Prepare for War: The U.S. Army and the War of 1812

By Schuyler Ogden

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Introduction: Remembering a Forgotten War

What would someone think of when they heard the words "forgotten war?" Most likely, they think of any conflict that either does not get much attention or does not have much written about it. Many wars and conflicts have been termed "the forgotten war." Military historian Stephen Budiansky wrote, "those words have become a catchphrase much beloved by military historians seeking to excuse their obsession with obscurity."[1] Many conflicts in American history are called "forgotten wars." One of the conflicts that is truly a forgotten war is the War of 1812. "Rarely was a war-or at least large parts of a war- forgotten with such swiftness, and such mutual determination, as the War of 1812. The forgetting began almost as soon as the last shot was fired, and it has been going on ever since."[2] There are some relics of the war that still exist. Fort McHenry is still standing at the entrance of Baltimore Harbor and is a major tourist destination. The USS *Constitution* is still an active war vessel in the U.S. Navy and remains the oldest commissioned warship still afloat. The USS *Constitution* often reminds Americans of the gallant effort the navy played in the war. The efforts of the army on the other hand, are often overlooked and largely forgotten in most standard surveys of American history.

The War of 1812 (1812-1815) between the United States and Great Britain marked a watershed in early American military history. The biggest impact it had was on the army. Before the war, the army was a small fighting force that was mostly being used to hold down the frontier against Indian raids. After the Revolution, the army stayed intact but at a very small level. There was constant strife between the Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans over army policies and how to use it. The Federalists wanted a strong standing army that could rival those of Europe.

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[1] Stephen Budiansky, *Perilous Fight: America's intrepid war with Britain on the High Seas, 1812-1815,* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), x.

[2] Ibid.

The Jeffersonian Republicans wanted a "people's" army that used the state militias. Both parties spent the first two decades of the new Constitution calling for a raising of troops only to shrink them back down when they were no longer needed. On top of impressing American sailors during the Napoleonic Wars, the Americans confirmed the British were arming Native Americans in American territory. Twelve years of Republican policies shrank the army to a miniscule force with no real plan to raise troops by the time war broke out. When 1812 came, and President James Madison and the United States Congress declared war, the army was not ready for any military operations.

Upon the start of the war the army suffered defeats that showed their current system and organization was not working. The generals were veterans of the Revolution in their sixties and well out of their prime. The army had no uniform system of training or command structure. The soldiers received little training and often lacked the discipline needed to fight extensive campaigns against the British army. The commanders spent more time feuding with each other than planning military operations. The generals of the militia and regular army did not get along very well and often fought over seniority. The militia the Republicans put so much faith in also proved to be unreliable for national defense since many of them refused to leave their home states. Many in the United States government, particularly the "War Hawks," were also very overconfident in their ability to conquer Canada.

With its lack of structure, training, and miniscule size, the United States Army suffered devastating defeats in the early months of the war. General William Hull launched an expedition into Canada that ended in him surrendering Fort Detroit and left the Michigan territory in British hands. Another defeat came two months later after militia general Stephen Van Rensselaer was overwhelmingly defeated at Queenston Heights along the Niagara River. General Henry Dearborn

was supposed to attack Montreal, but he was very slow at moving and reluctant to fight, so a major campaign never opened in the Lake Champlain sector. At the end of 1812, The Americans lost two armies and one incompetent general never attacked in the east.

The year 1813 saw the army turn things around. Younger generals started to replace the older ones who proved to be incompetent commanders. William Henry Harrison used his frontier experience to defeat Indian chief Tecumseh and dissolve his confederacy, eliminating the Indian threat in the Ohio region. Andrew Jackson gained his reputation as a tough, vigorous, disciplined, and sometimes ruthless, commander during a smaller conflict with the Creek Indians in the Southeast. As time went on, he trained his men into the disciplined and courageous men of American legend and defeated the hostile Creek leaders at Horseshoe Bend in early 1814. The victories in the Creek War and against Tecumseh not only secured the American frontier, but showed changes in the American army system that were starting to reap benefits.

Some of the impressive victories for the army occurred in the northern theater of the war. General Winfield Scott set up a training camp in Buffalo, New York to train and drill new recruits. His training paid off in July 1814 at the Battle of Chippewa where the U.S. Army won its first victory against an enemy force of equal size in open field battle. His training and discipline paid off again at the Battle of Lundy's Lane later that month. The Americans may have withdrawn from the battlefield that day, but the engagement still ended in a draw. Despite this, the Americans once again showed they could hold their own against British regulars. The Americans also stopped a British invasion of New York at Plattsburg along Lake Champlain, stopping any hope of the British dominating the Great Lakes region.

Eighteen-fourteen also brought on some hardships for the Americans. The economy was in shambles, the eastern coast of Maine was invaded and occupied by British forces, and the

Chesapeake was being raided and pillaged by the Royal Navy. These raids culminated in the disastrous Battle of Bladensburg where American forces were crushed and sent running into the countryside. This defeat left the road to Washington DC wide open, and the British burned the capital. The Americans quickly bounced back from these devastating blows with the defense of Baltimore. With the city's strong defenses, and determined militia and regular forces, the British abandoned their attempt to capture the city and rejoined the rest of the fleet. At the end of the year, American and British diplomats negotiated the Treaty of Ghent, officially ending the war in the *status quo antebellum.* Before the treaty was signed, a British fleet was sent to attack the American South in the gulf region. After the war was officially over, the British forces clashed with Andrew Jackson and his mixed forces at the Battle of New Orleans where the British suffered catastrophic losses, including most of their commanders. This victory allowed the Americans to walk away from the war with some strut in their stride.

After the war, the Americans began to make reforms for the army based on the lessons they learned. For one, they reorganized the army's command structure to eliminate confusion, seniority strife, and improve logistical support. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun also pushed a resolution to increase the size of the army if war broke out again. The resolution was not well liked by Congress but became a large staple in early American military policy. The generals also contributed to post war reforms, especially Winfield Scott with the publication of his own drill manual that the army used until the Civil War. The army also adapted to new technology that emerged in the decades that followed the war. The attitude towards military education also changed. West Point was transformed into the military academy with the respectable reputation it has now. The first post graduate schools were also established after the war by General Jacob Brown to turn the teachings of West Point into field practice. Other military institutions started to

emerge during this call for better military education, especially in the South. These new reforms made a great impact on the United States Army after the War of 1812.

The United States Army went under serious changes since the beginning of the War of 1812. The policies before the war left it small, ill-prepared, and disorganized. It may have been able to stand against cohorts of Indians, but standing against a professional European army was a different matter. The defeats in the early months of the war proved Jeffersonian military policies were not working and needed to be replaced. The change in leadership, training, and emphasis on using regulars over the militia proved to be a better system than the idea of the citizen soldier. These lesson and beliefs were than carried on in post war reforms to make the army more professional to avoid future military catastrophes. The War of 1812 was the event where the United States Army began a change in policies towards professionalism.

The War of 1812 may not have an extensive historiography, but the scholarship on the conflict provides great details on what happened during the war. Histories on the conflict go back as early as 1815. One worth noting from this period is Alexander James Dallas' *An Exposition of the Causes and Character of the Late War* (1815). Originally written in 1814, it consists of the grievances the American people had against Great Britain. Dallas brought the real-life experience of the events in Washington D.C. at the time war was declared to interpret the reasoning behind it. This work is especially interesting because it provides insight on the self-constraint of American foreign policy and the conduct of the war itself. The focus of Dallas's work is on the foreign policy of the early American republic and the relations between law and war. It notes an emphasis on how international law should benefit those that are remaining at peace.[3] It is very much interpreted

[3] Alexander James Dallas, *An exposition of the causes and character of the late war*, (Boston, Printed and published by Thomas G. Bangs, 1815).

from the American perspective, having been published during a rise in American nationalism. Dallas sought to justify a war that was very unpopular among the American people, especially those in opposition to Madison's cabinet.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the War of 1812 faded from American memory. Authors who did write about the war, tended to look more at the impact the Navy had on the conflict. One such work that shows this is James Fenimore Cooper's *The History of the Navy of the United States of America* (1839). Originally written in two volumes, Cooper interprets the war as being very critical of American naval policies leading up to the war, noting how they were "short-sighted and feeble."[4] Cooper spends the rest of the book explaining the role the navy played in the war, especially the achievements of the USS *Constitution*. This is an important thing to mention because it is difficult to write a good history of the war without mentioning the USS *Constitution* since it is a symbol of pride and strength for the U.S. Navy.

One of the most popular histories of the War of 1812 is Theodore Roosevelt's *The Naval War of 1812* (1882). Roosevelt stated the purpose of this was: "The subject merits a closer scrutiny than it has received. At present people are beginning to realize that it is folly for the great English-speaking Republic to rely for defense upon a navy composed partly of antiquated hulks, and partly of new vessels rather more worthless than the old."[5] This shows Roosevelt's criticism of early American naval policies explaining that a strong navy with modern ships is needed for the defense of America instead of the old merchant vessels that were used in early American history. Roosevelt

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[4] James Fenimore Cooper, *The history of the Navy of the United States of America*, (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1839), 92.

[5] Theodore Roosevelt, T*he Naval War of 1812; or The history of the United States navy during the last war with Great Britain*, (New York, G. P. Putnam's sons, 1882), xxiv.

also sought to preserve the navy's important role in the war and how the major naval victories against the Royal Navy brought forth a rise in American pride at the time.

After Roosevelt's book was published, works on the War of 1812 began to take a hiatus in the early twentieth century. Very few, if any, were ever published during the first half of the 1900s, despite the centennial anniversary being between 1912-1915. A plausible reasoning for this is the 50th anniversary of the Civil War and the advent of the First World War occurring at the same time. Histories that were published were broad surveys of the United States written by progressive historians. One of the best-known ones is Henry Adams's *The History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison* (1889-1991). Henry Adams was critical of many of the Jefferson and Madison administrations' policies. He believed the policies were very foolish and doomed to fail since the young republic was still in its growth pains.[6] It is regarded as great source for the War of 1812 and is still used by historians to understand the political aspects of the conflict.

The War of 1812 did not make a resurgence in American historiography until later in the twentieth century. One that is worth noting is J. C. A. Stagg's *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic 1783-1780* (1983). Stagg wrote a history of the War of 1812 that explains the military aspects being shaped in relation to the social factors and political and diplomatic changes. His view of the conflict is it was one that was "the sum total of the difficulties experienced by Americans after 1783 as they labored to establish their experiment in republican government on secure foundations."[7] Much of Stagg's main exposition

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[6] Henry Adams, *The History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889-91), 258.

[7] John Charles A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U.P., 1983), xi.

is centered around the main factors of America's military failures. For one, Stagg explains the reluctance of the New England states and New York to relinquish their state militia out of their jealousy of the "Virginia dynasty" that has taken up the presidency for most of the nation's existence. Therefore, America's military failures were due to the weakness of the federal bureaucratic structure in Washington and Madison's clumsy management of his war department, which was untested and undefined at this point. Stagg does not explain other ways of how the war could have been fought, but he does show how the war exploited the strengths and weaknesses of the early American political system. Stagg is more critical of Madison's handling of the war, but he also shines new light on why and how the early military failures occurred and the efforts that were made to correct them after peace was declared.[8]

There have also been military histories that have been written about the War of 1812. One that looks at the entire war from all angles is John R. Elting's *Amateurs, to Arms! A Military History of the War of 1812* (1991). Elting covers all (or at least most) of the military campaigns from the war. He looks at the War of 1812 as an event where amateur Americans threw themselves in a war that ended in a stalemate. He notes how their inexperience and lack of training led to the disastrous defeats in the early months of the war.[9] He is very detailed in the training and tactics of the generals and notes how the changes in training led to success at battles like Chippewa and Lundy's Lane.[10] Elting is very critical of the early generals for their incompetence and gives praise to the latter generals for their boldness and reputations as fighters. As a military history, it is one that many military historians find essential.

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[8] Ibid, 335-40.

[9] John R. Elting, *Amateurs, to Arms! A Military History of the War of 1812,* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 1991), 50.

[10] Ibid, 203.

The war's bicentennial (2012-2015) brought on a new interest in the conflict. Many popular histories were published during this time and even some revisions were published too. Donald R. Hickey's *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (1989/2012) is one of the most well used recent scholarly works on the war. Originally published in 1989, it was revised and republished for the war's bicentennial with new information and illustrations. Since this is more of a chronological, comprehensive history so readers can better understand the war and what it was about, Hickey does not have a main argument that he is trying to make. He does, however, bring up how the war has been remembered and his "argument" is that the war is a forgotten war. Hickey notes how few Americans remember the war well and what they do remember is *The* Star-Spangled Banner from Fort McHenry, the USS *Constitution*, and the Battle of New Orleans. Most do not remember the causes or the struggles the country faced during the war. Hickey also notes how the war is mostly never heard of Britain, even noting that, "if you ask a British scholar about the War of 1812, he will probably think of Napoleon's invasion of Russia."[11] At the end, Hickey brings up how the war has transformed into myth with Andrew Jackson's victory at the Battle of New Orleans and how it faded out of American memory all together. His final remarks comment on how the war was not lost but won because of America's determination to fight for her rights and freedom against those who try to suppress them.[12]

There have not been any major works on the War of 1812 since its bicentennial. As a matter of fact, in the third edition of *The Naval War of 1812,* Theodore Roosevelt commented on his thoughts about the army during the war and what has been written about it:

> I originally intended to write a companion volume to this, which should deal with the operations on land. But a short examination showed that these operations were

[11] Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 2-4.

[12] Ibid, 316.

> hardly worth serious study. They teach nothing new; it is the old, old lesson, that a miserly economy in preparation may in the end involve a lavish outlay of men and money, which, after all, comes too late to more than partially offset the evils produced by the original short-sighted parsimony. This might be a lesson worth dwelling on did it have any practical bearing on the issues of the present day; but it has none, as far as the army is concerned. It was criminal folly for Jefferson and Madison, to neglect to give us a force either of regulars or of well-trained volunteers during twelve years they had in which to prepare for the struggle that any one might see was inevitable; but there is now less need of an army than there was then….Not only do the events of the war on land teach very little to the statesmen who studies history in order to avoid in the present the mistakes of the past, but besides this, the battles and campaigns are of very little interest to the students of military matters.[13]

Roosevelt continues the rest of the preface with a short summary of the land battles, but it lacks the depth and analysis needed for a proper military history. Granted Roosevelts book is focused on the naval battles of the conflict, but to dismiss the land campaigns as unimportant or "of little interest" almost ignores the role the army played in the war. Reasoning like this is why many of the events of the War of 1812, especially the land campaigns, are often forgotten and neglected throughout American history.

The War of 1812 needs to have a fresh look to not only understand what it was about, but how it impacted the United States. Since the war ended in the *status quo antebellum* many see the war as an episode of senseless violence that wasted precious lives, destroyed the nation's capital, and nearly brought the country to bankruptcy. However, the war had a bigger impact on the United States than most realize. One of the biggest impacts it had was on the American military. Before the war, the United States military was a small amateur force of citizens with little to no training; not much better off than those who fought in the Revolution. After the war, new policies were made to make the military more professional.

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[13] Roosevelt, *The Naval War of 1812,* xxvii-xxviii.

When the average American citizen thinks about the War of 1812, they most likely think of Fort McHenry and the "Star-Spangled Banner," the burning of DC, and Jackson's victory at the Battle of New Orleans. They may also think about the victories of the USS *Constitution,* where the ship earned the nickname "Old Ironsides." The historiography of the War of 1812 also includes many works that specialize on the navy and how it proved itself against the might of the Royal Navy. The army on the other hand does not receive as much ink as its ocean-going counterpart. The American army started out poorly but picked up a learning curve that won great victories and impressed their opponents. This learning curve was later implemented in the post war years that reformed the army from "amateurs to arms" to a professional fighting force that could rival European armies. This thesis contributes to the scholarship and historiography of the War of 1812 by showing the United States army's contributions in its second war with Great Britain and how experience in the war changed the way the army was to be used, organized, and perceived in the American mind.

Chapter One: Regulars and Militia: The U.S. Army before the War of 1812

When understanding the United States Army during the War of 1812, it is best to observe the conditions and policies in the years leading up to the conflict. The best way to begin is first analyzing the army between the days of Colonial America and James Madison's presidency. Since the days of colonization, American citizens have always been wary of the concept of a standing army. Samuel Adams once said, "A standing army, however necessary it may be at some times, is always dangerous to the Liberties of the people…Such a power should be watched with a jealous eye."[12] In the eyes of many Americans during the colonial period, a standing army represented the epidemy of uncontrollable power. Said army could theoretically lead to the overthrow of the legitimate government and bring about tyranny and oppression to all.[3] Eighteenth century Whig ideology put the citizen at the front and center of the ideal fighting force. According to James Kirby Martin and Mark E. Lender, "the virtuous and committed citizen was the indispensable being in the search for a republican order," per these ideals.[4] Their passion for freedom and their own local system was able to gain control of the legislative bodies of the North American colonies by the time of the Revolution. The main idea behind this system was to make large property owners the front line of defense since they would have the largest stakes in the conflict. These 'citizen soldiers' still had vast differences compared to the soldiers of the professional European armies.

The soldiers of these armies received hard training and strict discipline. With their military skills, they were more than capable of wreaking havoc on civilian populations. Many Americans

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[1] To Joseph Warren, Jan. 7, 1776, *Warren-Adams Letter* [Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, LXXII-LXXIII]

[2] Kohn, Richard H. Kohn. *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1802.* New York: The Free Press, 1975, 2.

[3] James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, *"A Respectable Army" The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763-1789,* (New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 30.

had first-hand experience with European military practices and how they enforced their policies. Due to these experiences many citizens of British North America saw a standing army as a foreign and unpopular institution.[5] The early settlers even changed the British militia system to avoid merging political and military power. In doing so, they created what is commonly referred to as a "people's army." The governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop, even noted, "How dangerous it might be to erect a standing authority of military men, which might easily, in time, overthrow the civil power."[6] Throughout colonial history, the military might of the British Empire was needed to put down different uprisings throughout the American colonies including Bacon's and Leisler's Rebellions.[7]

Almost every time Britain and her colonies had to cooperate with each other on military matters, their relations invariably ended in friction, mutual disgust, and antagonism towards one another. Things seemed to change for the better after the French and Indian War broke out. The British army and the colonial militias worked together reasonably well during this conflict.[8] The British army used the colonists' knowledge of Indian tactics and the land, and the militias used the sheer strength, size, and discipline of the regular soldiers.[9] Despite this cooperation, however, the colonists did not approve of some of the recruiting tactics the British army used during the conflict. Army recruiters often bribed country boys with rum, enlisted indentured servants, arrested colonial deserters, and put down riots on more than one occasion.[10] Historian Ezra Stiles wrote, "The officers endeavor to restrain the vices of the private soldiers while on Duty, but I take it the

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[4] Ibid, 4.

[5] Quoted in David Richard Millar, "The Militia, the Army and Independency in Colonial Massachusetts (Ph.D. thesis, Cornell Univ., 1967), 81.

[6] Fred Anderson's *The Crucible of War* (among others) provide further understanding over why this relationship went "reasonably" well.

[7] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword,* 5.

[8] Ibid.

Religion of the Army is Infidelity and Gratification of the Appetites."[11] This uneasy cooperation between the two powers did lead the British to victory in the French and their Indian allies in North America, who received most of France's land in the Treaty of Paris of 1763.

By 1763, many of the colonists liked the army for the protection it provided and the boost it provided for the local economy. However, in the next decade, moods began to change as the British Parliament made new policies for their overseas possessions and Americans began to see the British army as the feared standing army of classical thought. John Adams even referred to his memories fifty years after the conflict saying, "The treatment of the provincial officers and soldiers by the British officers during that war [the French and Indian War], made my blood boil in my veins."[12] These woes and concerns were manifested in the Declaration of Independence with Thomas Jefferson writing, "He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the consent of our legislatures." Jefferson continued by saying, "He has affected to render the Military independent and superior to the Civil power."[13] This shows one of the reasons for American independence was to escape the abuses of the standing armies of the old world.

As the American colonies were preparing for war against Britain there was a heavy reliance on the "people's army" that they had grown to appreciate. The basis for the colonial militia was founded on the principle of universal obligation. Every able-bodied man, usually between ages sixteen and sixty, must arm himself, enroll in his local unit, train periodically, and march to war when called.[14] As time passed, exemptions in the militia system became more common and it

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[9] Quoted in Richard Henry Marcus, "The Militia of Colonial Connecticut, 1639-1775: An Institutional Study." (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Colorado, 1965), 239.

[10] John Adams to Benjamin Rush, May 1, 1807.

[11] Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence,* (Philadelphia, PA, 1777. (Taken from *The U.S. Constitution: A Reader.* Hillsdale College Press, 2012).

[12] Louis Morton. "The Origins of American Military Policy," *Military Affairs,* XXI (1958), 75-82.

started to be used more for ceremonial or police purposes. The militia was far more localized, greatly disorganized, had very little military training, most members had no military experience, and lacked the discipline needed to fight a long war. With all of this in mind, the militia was more of a concept than an actual system.

Despite the issues of the militia, it did have its advantages and Americans never questioned its value. Its amorphous nature made it flexible to meet a variety of military needs. Simple legislative action could increase the numbers needed for cavalry units on patrol, obtain supplies, raise funds, increase training, or modify organization.[15] By the time of the American Revolution, the militia was a well-established part of American culture. It represented the antithesis of the corruption and tyranny of a standing army. John Hancock wrote, "From a well-regulated militia we have nothing to fear; their interest is the same with that of the state…They do not jeopardize their lives for a master who considers them only as the instrument of his ambition."[16] Going into the War for Independence, the militia proved itself to be vital for the American people, but compared to the Continental Army it would not fare as well in terms of professionalization.

The Continental Army was structured very differently than the militia. After Congress appointed George Washington as commander-in-chief, they also approved the appointment of four major-generals and eight brigadier-generals. Other appointments supplied the army with its first quartermaster, commissary, and adjutant generals.[17] Initially, there were problems over to whom the army belonged. Many people, including Washington, feared the army would become a national institution that Congress could use to control the American populace. This left the army in the

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[13] Milton Wheeler, "Development and Organization of the North Carolina Militia," *North Carolina Historical Review.* XLI (1964), 307-323.

[14] John Hancock, Boston Massacre Oration, Mar. 5, 1774.

[15] James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, *"A Respectable Army,"* 40-41.

hands of Washington and the people to avoid abuses in power. However, this created problems of its own because Washington had to rely on the states themselves to raise troops to report to the main army. Throughout the war this was a major headache for Continental officers as the states never recruited the numbers they were asked for and the army always dwindled in size.[18]

This was just one of the difficulties Washington faced in managing the army. Not long after their appointments, his officers were already squabbling over status and rank, and the army he assumed command of in Cambridge resembled more armed chaos than an organized fighting force. At the beginning, the most serious problem was the lack of order and discipline. Washington wrote, "Discipline is the soul of the army, it makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak and esteem to all."[19] Washington's ideal army was one that was modeled after the British establishment. He insisted on enforcing the distinction between officers and enlisted men. With this, Washington found the tendencies of the New England troops very unsettling. In one of his letters he complained, "their officers, generally speaking, are the most indifferent kind of people I ever saw. I dare say the men would fight well (if properly officered), although they are an exceedingly dirty and nasty people."[20] Despite this, the Continental Army was able to hold its own in the weeks that followed, and with artillery assistance from Henry Knox they were able to force the British to evacuate Boston. This would only be the beginning of the struggles of America's first army.

The Continental Army was plagued with issues throughout the Revolution. The army lacked food, order, ammunition, and even clothes for its soldiers. Many men deserted because of

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[16] Ibid, 43.

[17] Washington to Virginia captains, 1759. (*George Washington Papers,* Library of Congress).

[18] George Washington to Lund Washington, August 20, 1775. *George Washington Paper,* Library of Congress.

these appalling conditions or fell out of line. To enforce discipline, Washington would resort to British methods and use harsh penalties on the soldiers. Ill-disciplined soldiers were flogged or court-martialed and deserters were often hanged in front of the troops as an example.[21] Washington could use the methods all he wanted, but he never resorted to such measures, as it never solved the training issue. This changed after the arrival of Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben during the winter at Valley Forge. He trained the troops to march in straight lines, how to shoot accurately in large volleys, and the necessities of order among the ranks.[22] All of these techniques were later written in a drill manual that the army used for the next couple of decades and helped lead the Continental Army to victory in the war.

After the Revolution, the comparison between the militia and regulars, in the eyes of the people, remained unclear, but the staff of the Continental Army all agreed with their thoughts on the militia. The officers of the Continental Army believed, and to some extent proved, the militia was unreliable. As Washington and his staff worked to establish a well formed, disciplined, and organized institution that could defeat the British army, he and his staff concluded Continental regulars should replace ill-organized and vastly untrained militia regiments. Washington wrote his thoughts on the militia system, "They come in and you cannot tell how, go, and you cannot tell when; and act, you cannot tell where. They consume your provisions, exhaust your stores, and leave you at last in a critical moment."[23] Washington and his army leaders recommended to the Continental Congress to establish a national military establishment and overhaul the militia completely. Many of his staff members became members of the Federalist party, who were in favor of a professional military institution.

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[19] Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army,* 16.

[20] Thomas Fleming, *George Washington's Secret War,* (New York: New Word Inc, 2016), 330.

[21] George Washington to the President of Congress, Dec. 20, 1776.

These changes would not come into fruition until later though. Before the Constitution was written, the United States functioned under the Articles of Confederation. Under this document, "The United States in Congress, shall have the sole exclusive right and power of determining peace and war."[24] However, the Articles gave Congress no power to raise a military, leaving it to the states to raise their own militia units, no power to levy taxes to finance such institutions, and no means to organize any officers' staff in a time of national emergencies. All these issues dissipated after the writing of the Constitution in 1787, which granted Congress the power to raise and support armies and navies, to suppress insurrections, and repel invasion among other military related government roles.[25] However, the Constitution limited army appropriations for two years, so a permanent standing army system was only possible if Congress gave it continuing consent. The Constitution also named the President as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Navy, and militia "when called into the actual service of the United States."[26] The President could also appoint officers with the advice and consent of the Senate, so the Constitution gave the military two masters so as to not disrupt the functioning of checks and balances.

The Constitution also forbade the states from forming alliances, authorizing privateers, keeping non-militia troops or warships in times of peace without Congress's consent, or engaging in war "unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger will not admit of delay."[27] The Constitution did not explicitly state that the states could retain their own militias, but the states did have authority to appoint militia officers and train them as mentioned in the Second Amendment.

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[22] United States Congress, *The Articles of Confederation,* (Philadelphia, PA, 1777. (Taken from *The U.S. Constitution: A Reader.* Hillsdale College Press, 2012).

[23] United States Congress, *The Constitution of the United States of America,* (Philadelphia, PA, 1787), (Taken from *The U.S. Constitution: A Reader.* Hillsdale College Press, 2012), 53

[24] Ibid, 54.

[25] Ibid, p. 56-57

This dual army system was institutionalized under the new government and many of the Constitution's supporters, the Federalists, were pleased with their efforts to establish a more professionalized military institution. The Constitution's opponents, the Antifederalists, however, were not so pleased with the central government seemingly taking over the militia system, its potential to undermine both state autonomy and the militia's local nature. Despite such opposition, however, the Constitution was ratified by the ninth state needed and the new government went into effect.[28] The Constitution may have granted Congress the power to raise a military, but the beliefs regarding its actual function and role in American society continued to be heavily debated by the first two-party system, the Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans.

Throughout the Revolution, George Washington always wanted America to have a professional army. The main way to define a professional army compared to that of the militia and other provincial forces is the strict discipline, regular training, and years of commitment to it. Armies of the eighteenth century were tightly structured institutions characterized by arduous training and hard discipline. The common weapon was a smoothbore musket, which was highly inaccurate at long distances and difficult to reload, especially in battle. Battles themselves were often fought at close range with tightly-packed ranks and moved until they could fire a few volleys and charge with bayonets.[29] Armies would often have detailed these methods in military manuals. The one commonly used by the early American army before the War of 1812 was the drill manual written by Friedrich von Steuben, the famous Prussian drill instructor of Valley Forge mentioned above.

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[26]Allan R Millett. Peter Maslowski. William B Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 82.

[27] Kohn, *Sword and Eagle,* 2.

Steuben wrote the manual as part of his training plan for the Continental Army to act in the same manner as the professional European armies. Steuben went into extraordinary detail about the movements the soldiers and commander were supposed to undertake as they marched on the field. He also wrote how many officers were to be assigned to each regiment and battalion. His booklet also explained about preserving order and cleanliness within camp. He wrote things such as, "At least one officer of a company must remain on the parade to see that the tents are pitched regularly on the ground to mark out," as well as, "The quarter-master general must take care that all dead animals, and every other nuisance in the environs of the camps, be removed."[30] In an appendix version of the manual, Steuben included instructions for each of the commissioned officers in regards to how to handle their men, instruct them, and approach them while on duty. For the young republic, this manual proved to be vital and useful when turning a rag-tag group of citizens into a formidable fighting force.

Even though the United States had a military manual to use, the struggles and debate over the army carried into George Washington's presidency. To administer military affairs, Congress authorized the creation of the Department of War, where Henry Knox would serve as its first secretary. He oversaw all actions and policies that were made for the regular army during Washington's presidency. For the militia, Washington and Knox urged Congress to reorganize it into an effective fighting force under national control, but this would prove to be more difficult.[31] The states were not too eager to give up their right to organize their own militias and action on dealing with this did not come about until 1792. The Calling Forth Act, or the First Militia Act,

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[28] Friedrich von Steuben, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline for the Troops of the United States.* (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1985), 81 and 84.

[29] Millett. Maslowski. and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 83.

gave the constitutional authority of Congress to call forth the militia by delegating that authority to the president himself. The Act itself states:

> That whenever the United States shall be invaded, or be in imminent danger of invasion from any foreign nation or Indian tribe, it shall be lawful for the President of the United States to call forth the such number of the militia of the state, or states, most convenient to the place of danger, or scene of action, as he may judge necessary to repel such invasion, and to issue his orders for that purpose, to such officer of officers of the militia, he shall think proper. And in case of an insurrection in any state, against the government thereof, it shall be lawful for the President of the United States, on application of the legislature of such state, or of the executive, (when the legislature cannot be convened) to call forth, as he may judge sufficient to suppress such insurrection.[32]

This act gave full authority over the militia to the president when the occasion was thought necessary, and he alone would deem when it was necessary. However, there were restrictions on its use. Before he could do so, a federal judge had to confirm that civil authority was powerless to stop the crisis, and the president had to formally order the insurgents to disperse and give them the opportunity to disband. It also states that a militiaman, in any case, could not be mobilized for more than three months in any one-year period.[33]

The second of these acts passed was the Uniform Militia Act, or the Second Militia Act. This authorized for the service of "Every free, able-bodied, white male citizen of the respective States. resident therein, who is or shall be of age of eighteen years, and under the age of forty-five years, be enrolled in the militia, by the Captain or Commanding Officer of the company, within whose bounds such citizen shall reside…"[34] Members were also required to equip themselves with a musket, bayonet and belt, two spare flints, a box suitable for carrying no less than twenty-four good cartridges, and a knapsack. If not, then each member was to have a rifle, powder horn, a

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[30] United States Congress, Calling Forth Act of 1792, 2nd Congress, 2nd session, 1792.

[31] Walter Millis, *Arms and Men: A Study of American Military History,* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1956), p. 50-51.

[32] United States Congress, Uniform Militia Act of 1792, 2nd Congress, 3rd Session, 1792.

quarter pound of gunpowder, twenty rifle balls, a shot pouch, and a knapsack.[35] This law also divided the militias into "divisions, brigades, regiments, battalions, and companies" as their respective state legislatures would direct.[36] The authority of the president to call out the militia in an emergency was carried over in this legislation as well as authorizing court martial proceedings against offending members who disobeyed orders.

Even though the president could call upon the militia in times of crisis, the states themselves still had the power to raise the units and organize them, which often left large inconsistencies in America's fighting force. The elasticity of the militia resulted in volunteer units forming into de facto independent corps, which was far from what Washington hoped for. These units were neither nationalized nor professional. The failure to create reliable state militias made the concept of a standing army of vital importance and Congress moved slowly towards that goal. In September 1789, it adopted the 1st American Regiment and the artillery battalion raised during Shays' Rebellion. Not long after that, Congress added four companies to the regiment, bringing the total authorized force to 1,216 troops. However, this microscale force proved to be inadequate in fighting Indians along the frontier.[37]

The Tennessee frontier provided some challenges, but most of the threats from Indians came in the Northwest Territory. The Indians in this area were beginning to form a confederation to stop American settlers from intruding on their land, and they often received aid from the British. One campaign to suppress native resistance ended in a great military disaster for the army. In June 1790, Henry Knox ordered Josiah Harmar and Arthur St. Clair, governor of the Northwest

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[33] "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875," *Annals of Congress,* 2nd Congress, 1st Session.

[34] Uniform Militia Act, 1792.

[35] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 84.

Territory, to put together an expedition into the hostile Indian lands along the Wabash and Maumee Rivers. The force consisted of two main wings for operations. One wing departed Fort Knox and marched towards the Wabash, but they turned back before even reaching their target. The other wing, led by Harmar, had about 320 regulars and 1,113 militiamen, and they managed to reach their target. This force burned some villages along the Maumee, but they were later ambushed by a group of Indian warriors and the columns fell into disarray. The regulars fought well, but the militiamen acted cowardly and disgracefully. Most were disobedient at best and mutinous at worst, and in battle they tended to flee before ever fighting.[38] Harmar and St. Clair tried to frame the defeat as a success, but the reports proved otherwise, and this blunder made things worse by encouraging Indians and humiliating the United States in the eyes of the British.

This disorganized and unprofessional military affair was followed by another one, with even worse results. Naturally, Washington was furious about the defeat and leaped to blame Harmar. Rather than reassess the nature of the military activities in the area, Washington believed the issue was the commander and he quickly sought his replacement and appointed St. Clair.[39] After the defeat, Congress added another regiment to the army, authorized Washington to call out militiamen, and allowed him to enlist 2,000 "levies" for a period of six months. These levies were an innovative force. A method of mobilizing manpower that was a compromise between regulars and militia units. These were federal volunteers, but like the militia, they only served short terms. Throughout the nineteenth century, this would be the normal method of recruiting "citizen-soldiers."[40]

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[36] David S. and Jeanne T. Hiedler, *Washington's Circle: The Creation of the President,* (New York: Random House, 2015), 180-181.

[37] Ibid, 183.

[38] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 85.

Washington had St. Clair and his mixed force of militiamen and levies stationed at Cincinnati, and they had little training since the president urged for the army to march as soon as possible. Quarrels between the volunteers, militia, and regulars were common in early American ranks and would later contribute to great defeats during America's second war with Great Britain. Much like the Continental Army, the men suffered from lack of equipment and food and often had to wait for more rations to arrive, but St. Clair persisted nonetheless.[41] Due to these setbacks, the Americans were not able to set out on their campaign until October 1791, their target being Kekionga, the capital of the Miami tribe.[42]

St. Clair's force had about 600 regulars, 800 levies, and 600 militiamen, adding up to about 2,000 men total. However, these numbers started to shrink in the days that followed. Many of the soldiers started deserting and the numbers fell to as few as 1,486 men. The march itself was moving very slowly and discipline was a constant thorn in St. Clair's side as he struggled to maintain order, especially from the militia and levies. By the time November rolled around, the army numbered around 1,120 people, including camp followers. As the American army shrank, the Indians were growing in numbers, having as many as 1,100 warriors.[43] On November 3, St. Clair had fifty-two officers and 868 regulars and militia report for duty as they were encamped along the Wabash River.

The next morning, Indian forces under the command of Little Turtle and Blue Jacket led a charge against the militia on the other side of the river. Like Harmar's expedition, the militia ran away from the onslaught, leaving their weapons behind. They ran across the river and up the hill

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[39] Ibid.

[40] James Ripely Jacobs, *The Beginning of The U.S. Army: 1783-1812.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 98-99.

[41] Ibid, 101.

to the main camp where the regulars grabbed their weapons and fired a volley into the charging natives, forcing them back. However, the Native Americans flanked the regulars, and the entire American encampment was surrounded. The soldiers' muskets and artillery fire proved inadequate against the natives hiding in the dense forest. One of the regular officers ordered the men to fix bayonets and charge at the Indians, pushing them back into the forest. Following this action, Little Turtle surrounded the battalion and destroyed it. Other attempted bayonet charges produced similar results. St. Clair himself had three horses shot from under him and was unsuccessful in rallying his men.[44] St. Clair led a last bayonet charge to break through the Indian lines so his men to escape the slaughter. They were able to get away, but the entire campaign ended as the worst disaster for the U.S. Army against a Native American force. Shortly after Washington demanded St. Clair's resignation.[45]

After this defeat in the Northwest Territory, the government began to reopen negotiations with native tribes over border disputes along the Ohio River. While these talks were going on, Knox began to reorganize and expand the American army. The army was expanded into the Legion of the United States, composed of 5,280 officers and men divided into four sub legions. Washington pondered over a commander for the new force, but eventually selected Anthony Wayne, a Revolutionary War veteran with a reputation of courage and being offensive minded. Wayne drilled the legion for about two years, making it into a formidable and disciplined force.[46] In late 1793, after negotiations with the Indians failed, Knox ordered Wayne to use the Legion "to

[42] Thomas E. Buffengarger, "St. Clair's Campaign of 1791: A Defeat in the Wilderness that helped forge today's U.S. Army." (U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, September 15, 2011).

[43] Hiedler, *Washington's Circle,* 184.

[44] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 86.

make those audacious savages feel our superiority in arms."[47] Soon enough, Knox would get his wish at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

To train the troops was a task all on its own. Wayne was used to Steuben's drill manual that trained soldiers to fight in open fields against British redcoats. To fight Indians on the American frontier would take a whole new form of training. He made sure all his officers had a copy of Steuben's *Blue Book* while also making some adjustments for fighting the Indians.[48] Wayne had to train his men to be more flexible than what Steuben's instructions demanded. His men would have to form lines quickly and be more spaced out rather than being packed in tight ranks. The columns would also need to be flexible because they would be facing many warriors charging at them from all sides from the woods instead of a massive volley of infantry right in front of them. Wayne also had to train his troops to fire at Indians while his dragoons charged at them on both flanks. He received much from a well-respected cavalry officer, Colonel Robert Miscampbell, whom he met in Pittsburg.[49]

Wayne also discovered that his men, new or veteran, were very inadequate at reloading their muskets and firing with any accuracy. This issue plagued the American army and contributed to St. Clair's defeat. In order to train his men to shoot like the Indians, he ordered daily target practice from eleven to noon. This may have been a financial burden, but he wanted everyone, including the horses, to be used to the sounds and flashing of gunfire. To cut down costs of this exercise, he ordered his men to dig the lead balls they fired out of the trees and posts they fired at and remold them into new bullets. Every evening, he awarded an extra gill of whiskey to the soldier

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[45] Henry Knox to Anthony Wayne, Sept. 1793.

[46] Mary Stockwell, *Unlikely General: Mad Anthony Wayne and the Battle for America,* (Hartford, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 35.

[47] Ibid, 56.

who shot the best and a half gill of whiskey to the one who came in second. Wayne also developed a new quicker way to load their guns. Working with artificers, he discovered if the push hole was made wider and at an angle instead of straight down, there would be no need for priming. The only major requirement would be to have good gunpowder. With all these changes, he estimated the soldier who used this modified musket could shoot half again as much when he was standing and even twice more when running.[50]

During Wayne's campaign, he constructed Forts Greenville and Recovery where the army would conduct most of its operations. In response to his presence, the British established Fort Miami at the Maumee rapids (modern day Ohio) and as many as 2,000 Indians gathered there by June 1794, expecting British aid. On June 30 and July 1, the Indians, along with Canadian reinforcements, attacked Fort Recovery. Despite being outnumbered, the legionnaires were able to repulse the attackers.[51] Elsewhere, due to the government's inability to get the Legion to full strength, Wayne called upon the Kentucky militia for mounted volunteers. Approximately 1,500 arrived in late July and the Legion began to march. During the campaign, Wayne expected to encounter a force of British soldiers from Upper Canada and the Indians of the Northwest Territory. As it happened, only 500 Indian warriors stood in opposition.

Wayne divided his force into two wings, the right commanded by James Wilkinson, and the other commanded by John Hamtramck. The mounted Kentuckians guarded the Legion's left flank while the regular cavalry screened the right along the Maumee River. Early in the morning on August 20, the vanguard came under fire. After some initial confusion during the volleys, Wilkinson was able to regain control of his men. Wayne then drove forward and quickly caught

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[48] Ibid, 56-57.

[49] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 86.

wind of the battlefield topography and realized the mounted cavalry would be ineffective at their current position. While under fire, he ordered his men to fix bayonets and charge at the Indian forces to flush them out in the open, where they could be cut down by musket fire. Overwhelmed, the Indians began to flee from the battlefield towards Fort Miami, where they received no help from the British.[52]

Unlike the results from earlier campaigns, Wayne's proved to be very successful. Their defeat at Fallen Timbers gave the Indians little hope of maintaining the Ohio boundary and the Treaty of Greenville made them cede most of Ohio and a small portion of Indiana to the United States. This victory also weakened the British influence in the Northwest Territory and made them abandon the posts they held onto so dearly since the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Most of all, the victory proved the government's ability to maintain a more professional army that could "provide for the common defense," at least in campaigns and conflicts against Indians along the frontier.[53]

Not only did this new military policy prove itself against Indian attacks it was viable in stopping insurrections against the national government. In 1794, the Whiskey Rebellion erupted in western Pennsylvania as protesters showed great dissatisfaction over an excise tax on grain. Discontent over the tax also grew in Maryland, Georgia, Kentucky, and the Carolinas. Initially, Washington wanted to use caution in the matter. He feared sending an armed force to suppress the protesters would create a mass revolt throughout the states.[54] Also, with the Legion busy in the west, Washington would have had to rely on the state militias, and he worried they would not mobilize in time or at all. Since negotiations failed, and they ignored the president's proclamation

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[50] Matthew Seelinger, "The Battle of Fallen Timbers, 20 August 1794," *The Army Historical Foundation*, July 16, 2014, accessed November 2, 2023, https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-fallen-timbers-20-august-1794/.

[51] Jacobs, *Beginning of the U.S. Army,* 186-188.

[52] Forrest McDonald, *The Presidency of George Washington*, (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1974), 146.

to disperse, Washington's administration believed "the crisis was arrived when it must be determined whether the government can maintain itself."[55] It was now or never to see if Washington could "maintain domestic tranquility."

Washington then sent orders to the governors of Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, and Pennsylvania to assemble around 15,000 men to put down the rebellion. Much to Washington's gratification, the states complied with his request. This was the first time in American history where the militia acted as a national entity rather than a local institution. Washington led the troops himself. When word got out about the massive force marching into western Pennsylvania, the rebellion dispersed and peace was restored without a single shot being fired.[56] This new military system was able to prove it could work to fight in a national crisis and stop possible insurrections, proving the usefulness of a professional military.

Applying these two kinds of forces, the regulars and militia, in two different situations, the Federalists were able to demonstrate their belief that the government deserved respect. Unfortunately, this coercive action also showed how military policies can also be politicized. The partnership between the Federalists and the military revived the old prejudice towards a standing army from the colonial days. The Jeffersonian Republicans (or just Republicans) were happy the rebellion was squashed and the frontier safe, but they also saw this as an example of a strong government using armed tyranny. The Republicans cast an anxious eye towards the Legion and believed it should be dramatically reduced.[57] They argued the Treaty of Greenville made a standing army unnecessary on the frontier since England promised to evacuate all its garrisons in the region.

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[53] "To George Washington from Thomas Mifflin, 5 August 1794," *Founders Online,* National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-16-02-0361.

[54] Kohn, *Sword and Eagle,* 135.

[55] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 87.

They believed armed settlers would be sufficient to repel any Indian attacks, provide adequate defense along the frontier, be much cheaper than stationing regulars, and be less of a danger to liberty. They also feared the Federalists would use the military to enforce their policies and engage in other despotic domestic actions.[58] However, Washington's administration argued that any reduction of the Legion was inadvisable. They pointed out the nation needed a regular army to garrison western posts, deter aggression, and preserve "a model and school for an army, and experienced officers to form it, in case of war."[59] That being said, they argued that, with the militia's discreditable reputation, the legion was undoubtedly necessary.

In 1796 both parties came to a compromise over the American army. The Republicans in Congress passed resolutions to dissolve the American Legion and reorganize it into a reduced force of only two light dragoon regiments and four infantry regiments. The Federalists also got their wish by having a peacetime army remain intact. This allowed for westward expansion to the Mississippi River to continue with a spearhead force to move it forward on the frontier.[60] Washington was a little displeased to see the army be reduced again into a miniscule force, but for the sake of unity in Congress he was willing to look past it. Washington was able to secure his legacy as an effective commander-in-chief upon his leaving the presidency in 1797, passing the torch to his Vice President, John Adams.

As president, Adams inherited the same problem facing Washington, the necessity of a policy of neutrality. In 1793, England and France went to war during the height of the French Revolution and the conflict fiercely divided Americans. The Federalists showed more favor

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[56] Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 24-26.

[57] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 88.

[58] Ibid.

towards England because of the close cultural and commercial ties between the two. The Republicans were more in favor of France because of the alliance established in 1778 and sympathies towards the ideals of the French Revolution. Washington signed the Jay Treaty in 1794, which favored England, and created great discontent throughout the country. Nonetheless, Washington was able to deter war and stick by his policy of neutrality in European conflicts, a policy John Adams continued.[61]

Problems continued to escalate for the second president. In retaliation to the Jay Treaty, France increased its raiding of American ships and refused new diplomatic ministers. Cries for war against France grew rapidly among the Federalists as Adams tried to continue with the policy of neutrality. Things took a turn for the worse after the notorious XYZ Affair that angered the American people and created a bigger rift between Federalists and Republicans. In 1798, war scares grew rapidly as rumors of a French invasion began to circle, rumors that escalated partly because of Alexander Hamilton. John Quincy Adams, the president's eldest son, even replied, "I can see no conclusion for us other than one of these; either to receive constitutions, armies and fraternity…and submit… to the will of France; or at least to engraft a military spirit upon or national character and become a warlike people. The result is in either case not pleasant."[62] Adams was faced with a great dilemma and sought legislation that would help the nation if things took a turn for the worse.

In the weeks that followed Congress passed laws to prohibit the export of arms, expand coast defenses, and purchase cannons and other armaments for foundries without any debate on it. In April 1798, James McHenry asked Congress for three new regiments and a Provisional Army

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[59] Ibid, 89.

[60] John Quincy Adams to William Vans Murray, Mar. 20, 1798, Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, (New York).

of 20,000 men. "To forbear…from taking naval and military measures, to secure our trade, defend our territory in case of invasion, and prevent or suppress domestic insurrection, would be to offer up the United States a certain pray to France," he said to Congress, "and exhibit to the world a sad spectacle of national degradation and imbecility."[63] Two weeks later, a bill for a provisional army was presented to the Senate and passed. Adams even called on Washington to be the army's commander in case war broke out. Washington was reluctant to come out of retirement yet again, but accepted the commission only if Hamilton was his second in command.

Thankfully, the threats of war did not amount to open armed conflict against France. The most things ever amounted to was the "Quasi-War" of 1798-1800, with the fledgling American navy that stayed mostly in the Caribbean Sea. During this small conflict, Adams was able to negotiate with the French to end the hostilities and they worked well. However, peace negotiations with France alienated him from the Federalist Party, especially Hamilton, and contributed to him losing the election of 1800.[64] The new commander-in-chief was Thomas Jefferson, and he had a different plan for the army.

Jefferson held skeptical views towards the standing army like many anti-federalists of the late 1780s. This did not mean the new president hated the idea of the United States having a military establishment. He believed the international arena was very predatory and military weakness would invite aggression from other powers. However, he desired America's military to play a purely defensive role and pushed for a strict non-interventionist policy in foreign affairs (following Washington's wishes) and in the economy, along with reducing the national debt. To achieve Jefferson's proposed military policies, there needed to be a substantial peacetime

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[61] McHenry to Samuel Sewall, Apr. 9, 1798.

[62] John Ferling, *John Adams: A Life,* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 393-395.

establishment.[65] Jefferson first and foremost saw the militia as the first means of defense, but he also believed it was necessary to buy "time for raising regular forces after the necessity of them shall become certain."[66] In this sense the militia was the first force to use for national defense until the regular army could be organized and raised for the task. He pushed for Congress to reform the state militias, making them an immediate, effective defense force so that the number of regulars could be reduced, but not eliminated.[67]

To achieve such reforms, Jefferson consulted closely with his Secretary of War, Henry Dearborn. Shortly after the start of the new administration, they began making headway with their new military policies. Jefferson and Dearborn promised a reduction in the army and after formulating the plan for it, sent the proposal to the House in January of 1802. There was not much to the new bill, proposing to reduce the size of the army to a little under 3,300 soldiers, almost sixty percent of the level under the previous administration. Instead of four infantry regiments, there would be two, and the two regiments of artillerists and engineers would be cut down to only one corps of artillery and a small separate engineer element.[68] The House spent two days debating the bill without making any changes to the original draft. The bill was not met without opposition. A Federalist newspaper reported the issue by saying:

> "These men who, under the former administration were most vociferous in condemning what they termed the lavish expenditure of the public money, are not seen the foremost in contending the sinecures and frivolous employments. On the bill fixing the peace establishment…Mr. Bayard and the Federal members generally, were for abolishing certain offices, whose pay is immense, and their

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[63] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 92.

[64] Jefferson, Thomas. *Fifth Annual Message to Congress.* Dec. 3, 1805.

[65] Theodore J. Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army: Political and Social Reform of the Military Establishment, 1801-1809.* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), 38-40.

[66] Ibid, 42.

> service nominal. Messrs. Giles, Smith Randolph, etc. were strenuous in favor of retaining these expansive supernumeraries. Such is the consistency of these men."[69]

The Republicans met this opposition with their own reasoning. They feared having some of these officer positions open could mean having a Federalist as a high ranking general, something they wanted to avoid.

Debate over the new bill began in the Senate in February that year. The debate delayed the start of the new establishment by a month, but it was not without its changes to the bill. New changes included extra rations for post commanders, since they entertained guests often, and gave more rations and provisions for hospital matrons and nurses, and women who washed the troops clothes.[70] The changes the Senate proposed also amended several items addressing military jurisprudence. The most important of these was changing the "Articles of War" that the army had been using since 1776. These new articles were introduced in 1804 and passed in 1806. The bill passed and the new military establishment went into effect on June 1, 1802. As Chief of Engineers (and future superintendent of West Point) Johnathan Williams wrote to James Wilkinson, the commanding general of the army, the version of the bill he heard from Dearborn in early December "has not been otherwise altered than [to put it into] the mere legal form required."[71] The new military establishment soon took effect, and the army began to take on a new "Republican" form.

Not too long after this, the Jefferson administration began pushing for more reforms so the army could be an instrument responsive to a Republican direction. One of the biggest of these reforms was the Military Peace Establishment Act of 1802. This act proved the mechanisms needed to break Federalist control and create a new source for officers that were more Republican.

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[67] January 21, 1802, *Annals*, 7th Congress, 1st session, [Reading, Pennsylvania] *Weekly Advertiser,* January 30, 1802.

[68] Crackle, *Mr. Jefferson's Army,* 43.

[69] Jonathan Williams to James Wilkinson, August 8, 1803, *Wilkinson Papers,* Lilly Library.

The act further reduced the army again, acting as a budget-cutting measure. The already small force was reduced by a slight amount this time, being a reduction of a little less than 300 soldiers.[72] The new act also eliminated eighty-eight officer positions but added twenty new ensigns. Needless to say, Jefferson appointed Republicans to these new posts, a policy that would later hurt the army after war broke out ten years later. For now, the new army represented everything Jefferson and his administration hoped for: a fighting force that represented loyalty and devotions to republican principles.

The most significant legacy of Jefferson's military policies was the establishment of the United States Military Academy. The location of the nation's most prestigious military school would be none other than West Point, New York, the same fort Benedict Arnold tried to surrender to the British during the Revolution. "It is contemplated to establish a Military School at West Point," Henry Dearborn wrote to the commanding officer, not even a month into the new administration. At West Point, Jefferson wanted to establish the school to create a Corps of Engineers that was distinct from the artillery. He stated, "the said corps… shall constitute a military academy."[73] The president himself had extraordinary powers over the Corps of Engineers and the academy. He was allowed to select the officers who would establish the school and teach there, as well as the cadets who would be admitted.

Since the 1780s, Federalists supported the idea of a national military academy, and Jefferson was in opposition. However, his opinions on the matter changed for two reasons. First, Jefferson wanted a national school to emphasize the teaching of sciences and produce men that would be useful to society. Military officers that were trained as scientists and engineers could

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[70] Crackle, 44.

[71] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 93.

benefit the nation as explorers and road builders.[74] In the years leading up to the War of 1812, West Point was not as well established at producing well known field generals such as Robert E. Lee or Ulysses S. Grant, something that would create a great gap in military leadership during James Madison's presidency. The second reason Jefferson was supportive of a military academy was it would be a gateway to creating a Republican officer corps. His new military school would train men from the Republican stock of the country for leadership positions in the new army. For many it would provide the education that so many desired but could not acquire. Historian Theodore Crackel described it as a "conscious, purposeful act of eminently and consistently political men."[75] This political alignment of military officers may prove good for politics, but not for military operations.

Jefferson may have corresponded closely with Henry Dearborn on military matters, but the secretary's military reforms would tarnish his reputation in the years to come. Dearborn was a popular and practical soldier of veritable merit; however, he lacked the experience and mental capacity of other leaders of the early republic. He failed in making the militia a dependable force for defense and creating a body of regulars that could make a framework for a substantial army in case of an emergency.[76] While he was Secretary of War, Dearborn admitted few new cadets to West Point, creating a great gap in military leadership. The regulars assembled were not being trained to meet the demands for future conflicts. Few officers possessed training or knowledge about commanding a unit of men larger than a company, unless it was learned during the Revolution. To make matters worse, the senior officers were so old they could not function well on the battlefield. The battalions had no staff, and it was not until 1808 there was any basic staff

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Crackle, 73.

[74] Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U.S. Army,* 278.

for regiments and brigades. The quartermasters in charge of the supplies had little control over where they went or if they even arrived at all. Many officers had little care for strategy or tactics and cared more for having balanced report books. The recruitment for troops was ignored and officers failed to act in times of emergency. As time went on, officers became more hesitant to act. Dearborn had shown a lack of ability in forming an army to meet the demands for national defense.[77]

It did not take long for a national war crisis to come out after these reforms were made. In June 1807, the HMS *Leopard* of the Royal Navy fired on the USS *Chesapeake* while still in American waters and seized four American sailors. Much of public opinion declared this violation an assault on America's honor and demanded action against Great Britain. Jefferson noted, "Never since the Battle of Lexington have I seen this country in such a state of exasperation as at present, and even that did not produce such unanimity."[78] Republican Joseph H. Nicolson said, "But one feeling pervades the Nation, all distinctions of Federalism and Democracy are banished."[79] Jefferson sought to resolve the tension through diplomacy and economic pressure instead of military confrontation. Congress passed the infamous Embargo Act of 1807 and expelled all British vessels from American ports. The measure ended up hurting the American economy and left Britain largely unaffected.

Jefferson still wanted to prepare the country as best he could if war did break out. James Wilkinson, the army's commanding general, submitted a five-step plan in the aftermath of the affair: 1) reconvene Congress; 2) proclaim an embargo on goods going to Britain; 3) prepare to defend the nation's more critical and vulnerable points; 4) expel any remaining armed British

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[75] Ibid, 278-79.

[76] Thomas Jefferson to Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours, July 14, 1807.

[77] Nicholson to Albert Gallatin, July 14, 1807.

ships; 5) and make general offensive and defensive preparations.[80] As stated before, Jefferson reacted cautiously. "We shall avoid… every act which would precipitate general hostilities."[81] Jefferson worked with Dearborn to work on military preparations in the event of war. "Should we have war with England, regular troops will be necessary," he made note of, but when Dearborn suggested raising force strength to 15,000, he was very hesitant.[82]

The *Chesapeake* affair also ignited a new debate over the militia and the kind of defense the nation should have. Journalist William Duane argued the nation needed to adopt a policy for better organization and discipline for the militia and that reliance on regulars was neither needed nor necessary. He proposed a militia with cavalry, artillery, and infantry, but put most of the emphasis on the light elements of these branches, the flying artillery, light infantry, and riflemen.[83] Jefferson's administration also passed reforms to raise the regular army's strength to 10,000 men, acquire money to complete, repair, and build coastal fortifications, and authorize $200,000 annually into arming the militia. Diplomatic methods failed to budge England, thus Jefferson eventually resorted to passing the Embargo Act.[84] As Jefferson's second term concluded, war fever receded, and he saw no need for military action. Shortly before he left, he had the Embargo Act repealed and Congress passed the Non-Intercourse Act, which lifted all embargoes on American shipping except for those going to Britain or France. When Jefferson left the presidency, he passed the torch to Secretary of State James Madison. Jefferson's efforts created what he had hoped for in an American military. He was able to create his vision of a "citizens army," putting more

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[78] James Wilkinson to Samuel Smith, July 18, 1807, Wilkinson Papers, Darlington Library.
[79] Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Smith, July 30, 1807, War of 1812 Manuscripts, Lilly Library.
[80] Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor, August 1, 1807, Washburn Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.
[81] *Aurora*, November 14, 1807.
[82] Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense,* 94.

emphasis on the militia for the purpose of national defense, but it came at the expense of the regular army.

When Madison became the new commander-in-chief, he inherited the situation Jefferson left behind. The economy was suffering terribly because of the embargo and many Republicans, led by "War Hawks" John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay, who were calling for war against Britain because of the *Chesapeake* affair, impressment of American sailors, and reports of arming of Native Americans in the Northwest Territory. Madison's first term was spent trying to redress the economic situation, increase national revenue, and deter war as much as possible.[85] However, that last part would prove very difficult as negotiations for Britain to repeal their Orders in Council kept falling on deaf ears, especially as they were still locked in their war with Napoleon. The Orders in Council were a series of policies Britain passed during the Napoleonic Wars that forbade any neutral ships from trading with France and her allies. The policies also, in the minds of the British admiralty, allowed the Royal Navy to search and seize any contraband or sailors who left the British Navy regardless of their nationality.

Things took a turn for the worse in the Indiana territory after the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. Indian raiders were running rampant in the Northwest Territory and Madison sent William Henry Harrison and his troops to suppress the uprising. The Indians were led by the brother of famous Indian leader Tecumseh, Tenskwatawa, also known as "The Prophet." After arriving near Tippecanoe Creek, Harrison agreed to a ceasefire with The Prophet and his warriors, but that would not last long. Early in the morning on November 7, Tenskwatawa and his warriors led a massive charge into the American camp and had Harrison and his men completely surrounded. Harrison was able to repulse the attack after gaining control of the chaos. After two hours of fighting, the

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[83] Lynne Cheney, *James Madison: A Life Reconsidered,* (New York: Viking Press, 2014), 367-369.

Indian warriors retreated to Prophetstown, and Harrison burned the village the next day. Upon entering the village, the Americans discovered crates and barrels of guns and ammunition that bore the stamp of the British royal crown. Discovering the British were arming Native Americans on American soil infuriated the citizens and government of the young republic, and again there was a widespread call for action against Britain.[86]

When the year 1812 rolled around, the call for war grew ever fiercer. With the advice of his Secretary of War, William Eustis, Madison called for an increase in the size of the army and for the state governors to have their militias on alert. By June that year, the president knew he waited as long as he could, and with his reelection at stake he called in Congress to request a declaration of war. In the end, he concluded the country was as ready as it was likely to be until war was on them. "It was certain that effective preparations would not take place whilst the question of war was undecided."[87] It was obvious the public demand for war was not going away and Congress met to decide how to best handle the situation. Representative Felix Grundy (JR-TN) declared on the House floor, "Whenever war is declared, the people will put forth their strength to support their rights."[88] From this, Congress had full confidence the people would rise to the occasion when it came to fighting for their rights and defending America's honor.

On June 1, Madison sent a message to Congress to address the offenses against Britain. The president declared these acts were "hostile to the United States as an independent and neutral nation," and recommended to Congress to take up the "solemn question" of whether the country should "continue passive under these progressive usurpations" or take up "defense of their natural

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[84] "Tippecanoe," *American Battlefield Trust*, n.d., accessed November 17, 2023, https://www.battlefields.org/learn/war-1812/battles/tippecanoe.

[85] Madison to John Nicholas, April 2, 1813.

[86] *Annals*, 12th Congress, 1st session, 1407, May 6, 1812.

rights."[89] On June 4, the House voted for a declaration of war and two weeks later, the Senate voted for the same. Madison signed the measure on June 18, and the United States was at war with Great Britain.

The United States Army had a rough start in its first decades as an independence nation. Rival politicians kept fighting over how the army should be organized, who should command it, and how big it should be. Even after success on the frontier, the army had no way of preparing itself for a war against any of the European nations. After decades of swinging military reforms, the country had no way to fight the War of 1812 when it started. The nation had no stable source of revenue to finance it and the army was unorganized and composed mostly of state militias and very few regulars. These soldiers had little to no training for such a large-scale event. Their officers were old and well out of their prime. Even as Britain was locked in their war with Napoleon, they still had a force to use in North America. The nation was not prepared for war, and they only had themselves to blame.

[87] James Madison, *War Message to Congress*. *James Madison Papers*. Washington DC: Library of Congress, June 1, 1812.

Chapter Two: "A Mere Matter of Marching:" Early War Defeats of the U.S. Army

With the United States again at war with Great Britain for the second time in forty years, President James Madison and his administration had to figure out how to conduct the conflict. The main strategy was to take Canada. Madison and many of the Republicans were extremely confident in their nation's ability to conquer its northern neighbor. Even Thomas Jefferson thought Canada could easily be taken by the United States. "The acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching, and will give us experience for the attack of Halifax the next, and the final expulsion of England from the American continent."[90] Their confidence may have been high, but there remained the question of how to accomplish this objective.

The civilians in the administration and army officers could not agree on a strategy to take Canada. Some of them could not agree on what to do should the plan succeed. Many of the "war hawks" like Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun thought about annexing Canada directly. Others thought about making it into a colony with lesser rights in the manner of the former Thirteen Colonies. However, that did not sit well with many Americans since the last war they fought was to end colonial rule. The principal objective became using Canada as leverage to force British adherence to American demands.[91] However, soon after war was declared, Secretary of States James Monroe stated that public opinion may make it "difficult to relinquish territory which had been conquered."[92] As bold as these thoughts were, there remained the question of how to successfully invade Canada, assuming it could be done.

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[1] Thomas Jefferson to William Duane, 4 August 1812, *Thomas Jefferson Paper,* LC.

[2] Walter R. Borneman, *1812: The War that Forged a Nation,* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 58.

[3] Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, *The Writings of James Monroe.* vol 5, 1807-1816, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), 213.

On top of not having a plan right away to invade the vast Canadian wilderness, problems from the pre-war period still plagued the army. The War Department consisted of Secretary of War William Eustis and eleven clerks.[93] The army itself did not look any better. The highest generals were old and out of their prime; many were Revolutionary War veterans who averaged sixty years in age. Most of these men had seen very little fighting and were appointed more for pollical purposes than military merit. There was also constant strife between the officers of the regular army and militia over whose authority was supreme over whose troops. There were also very few national roads that lead into the frontier, so delivering supplies was very difficult and often took weeks to reach their destinations. Supply lines were also incredibly vulnerable to raids from Indians and British patrols.

Another major issue with last minute preparations was recruiting. Recruiting never went the way Madison had hoped. He called for an army of 35,000 regulars, 50,000 volunteers, and 100,000 militia. When war broke out in 1812, the army had between 7,000-12,000 and the volunteers and militia were still terribly unorganized.[94] Years of reductions and cuts made army life very unattractive as a career to many men. Long period of service in isolated posts also left soldiers very ignorant and often left them unconcerned about other posts. Even though there was some recruiting, it proved to be slow and unproductive. For example, the 16th U.S. Regiment was formed in February 1812, recruiting started in May, and several companies were grouped into a single small temporary battalion. They did not even mobilize until September that year and the recruiting did not officially end until January 1813.[95]

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[4] Borneman, *1812,* 58.

[5] Millet, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*, 110.

[6] John R. Elting, *Amateurs to Arms*: *A Military History of the War of 1812,* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1995), 3

Another example is the story of the 2nd Light Dragoons. Its commander, Colonel James Burn was not appointed until April 30, 1812, and Eustis did not allow recruiting for another month. When he did allow recruiting to begin, he initially called for three out of twelve companies. When the men began to arrive, there was no clothing or equipment for them until later in the fall.[96] They did not receive winter cloaks until December, and by then they were already shivering in upstate New York. Horses for the unit were purchased in March, but half of them were not even on horseback until September. Even by then, many of the horses were unfit for service. Despite these issues, Eustis continued to spread out the regiment from the Ohio River to the hills of Vermont. One company disappeared from war department records altogether.[97] Recruiting did not go well for a lot of the state militia units either. Many of the states had trouble raising troops and New England, dominated by the Federalists, opposed the war and refused to commit troops. Representative Henry Clay (JR-K) still boasted about the militia from his native Kentucky. "The conquest of Canada is in your power. I trust that I shall not be deemed presumptuous when I state that the militia of Kentucky are alone competent to place Montreal and Upper Canada at your feet."[98] Unfortunately for Clay, only 400 Kentuckians answered the call to arms, and if he had any second thoughts, he kept them to himself.

By 1812, West Point had graduated seventy-one cadets, twenty-three of whom had already died or resigned. The school had no definite entrance requirements or curriculum for new cadets. Eustis had rough guidelines written in 1810, but there was not enough time for implementation by the time the war broke out. The cadets learned infantry and artillery drills and the basics of

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[7] Ibid, 4.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Clay, Henry. *Annals of the Congress of the United States.* Eleventh Congress, Second Session. February 22, 1810.

engineering. This new knowledge was small, but it was still more than what most regular and militia officers ever had. These early graduates of West Point were useful, but they were still too young and inexperienced to have any real influence.[99]

While the War Department tried putting a sizable military establishment together, Congress started to put together an army staff in March 1812. Congress refused to enlarge Eustis's staff, but they did appoint a quartermaster general, commissary general of purchase, and a commissary general of ordnance. These were much needed posts for the army, but the responsibilities of these jobs often overlapped and created conflicts. Madison belatedly appointed Callender Irvine as commissary general of purchases two months after war was declared. Irvine was a competent man, but he had little to no experience in military management affairs.[100] Madison's inspector general was incompetent at his job and his adjutant was no better. Their inefficiency resulted in a lack of reliable information on army strength, recruiting, and even troop locations. To make matters worse, staffs were inadequate for the expanding field armies. The necessary men needed, including adjutant generals, quartermasters, inspectors, and even aides-de-camp were commissioned civilians and officers from existing regiments that were already poorly managed.[101] The generals naturally took the most competent men they could find, draining units of much needed officers. Overall, the staff of the U.S. Army was inadequate compared to the standards of the Napoleonic armies of the time.

The "standing" militia consisted of volunteers. They were typically belter equipped and trained than the state militias, but still lagged compared to the regular army. Their cavalry served well as couriers and scouts but lacked the discipline and hard training to go against full-scale

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[10] Elting, 5.
[11]Ibid.
[12] Ibid, 6.

British cavalry charges.[102] The foot soldiers could be mustered more quickly than the regulars and they tended to be less expensive than the regular army since they normally had their own equipment. However, because of their lack of extensive training, they did not fare well against disciplined and well-trained British soldiers. Their units were more intended to hold off attacks until the regular army engaged.

By the year 1812, there were some improvements made to the weapons of the time. For the United States Army, the standard weapon was the Model 1795 Springfield musket. This musket was based on the design of the French Charleville musket but had a shorter barrel. It had a smaller caliber (.69) compared to the British Brown Bess (.75), but it also had a longer range (50-75 yards) and was more accurate. This gave Americans a range advantage in battle.[103] Improvements to this were made in 1812 and 1814, but they were never produced in large enough quantities to be widely used in the war. The standard rifle that was used was the Model 1803 Harpers Ferry Rifle. It had a much shorter barrel than the Kentucky/Pennsylvania rifle, which decreased the accuracy. However, this did make it easier to load since there was less power residue in the barrel.[104] Officers also used swords for close combat and regularly carried a handgun.

The army regularly got its rations from contractors-businessmen who secured to furnish to rations of troops though competitive bidding.[105] This often resulted in late deliveries, short supplies, and inferior quality. The army often lacked enough wool for uniforms and blankets, especially for regulation blue uniforms. Reserve supplies were often scarce or nonexistent. Fresh troops were given linen summer uniforms because they could be made sooner. Some of the troops

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[13] Ibid, 7.

[14c]Michael Barburi, "How far is a Musket shot? Farther than you think," *Journal of the American Revolution.* (Philadelphia: Aug. 25, 2013).

[15] Ibid.

[16] Elting, 8.

wore the old, ragged remnants of these uniforms and worn-out shoes through the war's first winter.[106] The lack of proper clothes and food naturally brought illness among the soldiers. The lack of proper medical supplies and personnel added to this. Much like the Revolution, many of the men were too sick for duty.

Federal arsenals were not able to produce artillery, but good private foundries were up to the task. Like the contractors, these businesses helped provide the necessary ordnance and cannons the army desperately needed. On top of artillery shortages, the army still lacked standard drill regulations for the infantry and capable non-commissioned officers as instructors. Militia and regular troops still used General Friedrich Steuben's drill manual from 1779, but there was a greater call for adaptations and translations of the 1791 French manual *Reglement.* Into 1814, American infantry formed in three ranks. After the war, a two-rank formation was introduced used heavily by the French and later the British during the Napoleonic Wars.[107] Americans also emphasized accuracy in their musket training more than their British adversaries' emphasis on fire discipline and rate of fire. The 13th U.S. Infantry trained by employing rail fences as targets to simulate an enemy line in battle. As during the Revolution, American sharpshooters tended to target enemy officers.[108] However, the British and Canadians still had the advantage regarding the terrain since they knew the area better and had easier travel. The British Navy also held dominance on the Great Lakes.

While the army was still trying to recruit and gather supplies, the staff was still trying to work on a plan of invasion. It did not take long for military strategists to figure out that the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes were the main lifeline for Canadian civilian commerce and

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[17] Ibid, 9.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid, 10.

thus military transport.[109] American commodore Isaac Chauncey proposed a possible plan of conquering Canada. He said if American forces were able "to take and maintain a position on the St. Lawrence" and "kill the tree" they could strangle the lifeline for the area.[110] His argument continued by emphasizing that by being deprived of commerce, Upper Canada would crumble and quickly look to the United States for sustenance. The Americans soon learned that these waterways also provided a great source of natural defenses.[111] Quebec was also a logical target but was heavily fortified and many of the older officers still remembered Benedict Arnold's failed attempt to take the city during the Revolution. Not to mention that Quebec was north of Federalist New England and the advancing army may discover that hostile territory was closer than they thought.

Madison eventually settled on a plan formulated by General Henry Dearborn. He proposed a three-pronged attack against Canada. A western army would advance from Detroit to take the forts in Upper Canada. A second force would march from western New York into the heart of Canada to gain the crossroads between Lakes Ontario and Erie and eventually Kingston, a major naval port. A third offensive would be mounted by an eastern army against Montreal from Lake Champlain.[112] The western prongs had an advantage of being deeper in territory supportive of the War Hawks where volunteers were thought to be abundant. Theoretically, the attacks along these three corridors should have been launched simultaneously. However, because of the lack of military preparedness, the incompetence of army officers, and the confusion in communications and the command structure, it was a miracle any of them launched at all.[113]

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[20] Borneman, *1812,* 59.
[21] Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*, 75.
[22] Borneman, 59.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

The western prong was the first to launch an attack on Canada. In the spring of 1812, three regiments of the Ohio militia met in Dayton and moved north to join the regulars of the 4th U.S. Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel James Miller.[114] General William Hull was put in command of these forces. A veteran of the of the Revolution and governor of the Michigan Territory, his appointment was more for political reasons than military. Hull had not seen much combat and did not command more than a large company. He later recalled that he accepted the job with "great reluctance."[115] Whether he wanted the job or not, he still accepted it and had to plan for an attack on America's northern neighbor. His recruits still lacked essential supplies including clothes, weapons, and shoes. Weeks went by before they ever received anything.[116]

Hull warned the War Department that dominance on Lake Erie was necessary for any military success. Hull wrote to William Eustis, "The British command the water and the savages."[117] However, with the American navy in such small numbers as it was, this was going to be very difficult, and preparations would take some time. With urgency from Eustis to move forward, Hull began to march his men to Detroit in early July. As he and his men moved, they built a road form Urbana (Illinois territory) to the Maumee River falls for supply lines.[118] Once he arrived, he made his first tactical mistake. He mistakenly put a trunk carrying his correspondence on the schooner *Cuyahoga*, which was soon captured by the British. The British commander and governor of Upper Canada, General Isaac Brock, was surprised to see the trunks contents. "I had

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[25] Robert B. McAfee, *History of the Late War in the Western Country,* (New York: 1816), 52.

[26] William Hull, *Memoirs of the Campaign of the North Western Army of the U.S. A.D. 1812,* (Boston: True and Green, 1824), 17.

[27] Milo M. Quaife, *The Capitulation; or A History of the Expedition conducted by William Hull, Brigadier-General of the North Western Army by an Ohio Volunteer.* (Chillicothe, OH: James Barnes, 1812), 34.

[28] Hull to Secretary of War, June 1812, in Cruikshank, *Documents.*

[29] McAfee, 50-51.

no idea that General Hull was advancing with so large a force."[119] Not only did Brock know what Hull was up to, he also knew what and where his main target was.

Hull reached Detroit on July 5, and then landed his force of around 2,000 men in Canada a week later unopposed. The Americans were very excited because of their success so far. Hull's aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Robert Wallace, wrote while they were occupying Sandwich, "The British cause is very low in the province and their militia and Indians are deserting in the hundreds. Our Flag looks extremely well on his majesty's domain."[120] Even Hull got caught up in all the excitement and boasted a bold, and somewhat arrogant, proclamation. "Inhabitants of Canada! You will be emancipated from tyranny and oppression and restored to the dignified station of freemen. Had I any doubt of eventual success I might ask your assistance, but I do not. I come prepared for every contingency."[121] Shortly afterwards, Hull turned his army south and marched to the east bank of the Detroit River to begin the siege of Fort Malden.

It did not take long for the campaign to unravel. Hull dallied while in front of Fort Malden by getting into many failed skirmishes trying to take the position, even though his forces outnumbered his opponent two to one.[122] Things were even worse for Hull when the Ohio militia refused to cross the river and move outside American territory, a constant problem in the early months of the war. The retreating Indians and Canadian Militia regrouped in the woods and waited for a coordinated attack from General Brock. As during the Revolution, the Canadian citizens ignored Hull's proclamation and stayed with the British forces. The American government overestimated the Canadian willingness to flock to the Americans to overthrow their British rulers.

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[30] Brock to LL, August 29, 1812, in Adams, *History.*

[31] Glen Tucker, *Poltroons and Patriots: A popular account of the War of 1812,* (New York: Bobs, 1954), 155.

[32] McAfee, 61-62.

[33] Borneman, 62.

Hull's supply lines were also threatened by British ships on Lake Erie and Indian raids, especially those still angered about the defeat at Tippecanoe. General Hull sent 150 men under Major Thomas Van Horne to meet a supply train from Ohio about thirty-five miles south of Detroit at the River Raisin. Indian warriors under Tecumseh attacked the detachment, forcing its retreat to Detroit. Hull tried again with 600 men under Col. Miller but met similar results.[123]

Hull's situation got worse after he got word that Fort Michilimackinac (shortened to Mackinac) surrendered to a combined force of Indians and British regulars. Fort Mackinac was commanded by Lieutenant Porter Hanks and was situated across the border from Fort St. Joseph, commanded by British Captain Charles Roberts. Hanks received no word from Hull that war had been declared and was caught off guard. Roberts prepared for an attack but made no moves until ordered by General Brock. Brock told Roberts to use the forces he had and to make the best of the situation. On July 16, Roberts mustered forty-six regulars, 180 Canadian militiamen and traders, and 400 Indians and moved west with canoes, barges, and the brig *Caledonia.*[124] Hanks and his garrison of fifty-seven regulars may not have known about the declaration of war, but they were aware that something was going on. Suspicious of the lack of Indian raids, Hanks sent a trader named Michael Dousman to Fort St. Joseph to investigate. Dousman went straight into the British flotilla and was captured. He returned in the dark hours of July 17.

Roberts's forces landed in a cove across from the fort and proceeded to a haul a six-pound cannon behind the fort.[125] Hanks was finally informed by the village doctor of the attacking British army and mustered his men to defend the fort. Hanks soon realized he was outnumbered and

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[34]Anthony J. Yanik, *The Fall and Recapture of Detroit in the War of 1812: In Defense of William Hull.* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2015), 85.

[35] Borman, 65.

[36] Yanik, 87.

outgunned while also noticing the cannon that was pointed at his position from the heights. A flag of truce came out two hours later and the British gave Hanks a simple message: "Surrender or face the uncertain actions of our Indian allies."[126] Realizing his situation was hopeless, Hanks surrendered the fort and its garrison without firing a single shot on July 17. He later reported to Hull, "This sir, was the first intimation I had of the declaration of war."[127]

Hull got word of Mackinac's surrender on July 28 and his fears began to sink in instantly. "This whole northern hordes of Indian will be let loose upon us."[128] Hull continued to make his situation worse by ordering the evacuation of Fort Dearborn (now Chicago), manned by about fifty regulars under the command of Captain Nathan Heald. It was well supplied and fortified; however, it remains unknown how long they would have held out against an attack. On August 15, Heald reluctantly evacuated the fort with his regulars, twelve militiamen, nine woman, and eighteen children. While in route to Fort Wayne, Heald and his men were attacked by a group of Tecumseh's warriors led by Potawatomi chief Blackbird. The captain tried to organize resistance and an orderly retreat but was quickly surrounded and overwhelmed. He surrendered to Blackbird, who did little to stop his warriors from slaughtering the group. Heald and his wife were among the few survivors, albeit wounded, and were captives until making their way to the surrendered Fort Mackinac.[129]

General Hull began to see the dire situation he was in and gave up his attempt to take Fort Malden and Amherstburg and withdrew back to Fort Detroit. Dissatisfaction immediately came to his men. One wrote down his thoughts, "He is a coward, and I will not risqué this person."[130] Some of the men even began talking about replacing Hull with Colonel Miller, but Miller knew mutiny

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[37] McAfee, 70-73.
[38] Hanks to Hull, July 28, 1812. *Hull Papers.* Michigan State Archives
[39] McAfee, 70.
[40] McAfee, 98-99.
[41] Thomas Jesup. August 2, 1812, in *Jesup Paper,* LL.

when he saw it and halted any potential uprising. One of Hull's officers, Colonel Lewis Cass, wrote to Ohio governor Return Jonathan Meigs alerting him of the situation. "From causes not fit to be put on paper, but which I trust I shall live to communicate to you, this army has been reduced to a critical and alarming situation."[131] Cass pleaded for at least 2,000 reinforcements but whatever forces Meigs could assemble were quickly pinned at the River Raisin. Hull tried to break into Ohio by sending 400 men under Cass and Colonel Duncan McArthur. They were unable to find the encampment and lost faith in their commander and opted to stay in the wilderness.[132]

With the Americans in retreat, General Brock took his force of around 2,000 men and pursued Hull across the Detroit River with his cannons and Indian allies. As he crossed the river, he gathered some more reinforcements and captured Hull's mail bag and discovered the conditions of the American camp. "I got procession of the letters my antagonist addressed to the secretary of war and also the sentiments which hundreds of his army uttered to their friends. Confidence in the general was gone and evident despondency provided throughout."[133] Brock surrounded the fort and demanded its surrender. He evenly used psychological warfare on Hull by tapping into his fear of the Indians. "It is far from my inclination to join in war of extermination, but you must be aware, that the number of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops, will be beyond my control the moment the contest commences."[134] Hull was terrified of a potential Indian massacre, especially with so many women and children inside.

General Hull himself fell apart as the siege commenced. He became very despondent, kept to himself, and his voice faltered when he spoke to others. Reports also say he stuffed large pieces

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[42] McAfee, 83.

[43] Hull, *Memoirs,* 73.

[44] Brock to brothers, Sept. 3, 1812; in Ferdinand B. Tupper, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock.* (London, 1847), 284.

[45] Brock to Hull, Aug. 15, 1812, in Brannan, *Official Letters,* 41.

of chewing tobacco in his mouth and was oblivious to the spittle that ran down his face and soiled his beard and clothes. He even became spooked by the artillery that was fired into the fort and he crouched down inside it.[135] There were also rumors of him drinking heavily and unaware of his actions, but there is no historical evidence to conclusively support it. An artillery shell shot through the officer's mess hall proved the final straw and he sent his son out of the fort under a flag of truce to discuss surrender terms. After a couple of hours of negotiations, Hull surrendered Fort Detroit on August 16.[136]

After learning of Hull's surrender, the soldiers and politicians were quick to ridicule him for his incompetence. Captain Robert Lucas wrote, "Not an officer was consulted. Even the women were indignant at the shameful degradation of the American character."[137] General Hull was sent back to the United States on parole and was court-martialed for cowardice and neglect of duty. He was spared execution out of respect for his age and service in the Revolution. Hull was immediately replaced by William Henry Harrison, the famous victor of Tippecanoe. The fall of Fort Detroit still left an even bigger issue. The loss of Forts Mackinac, Dearborn, and Detroit left the Northwest Territory open to attacks and raids.

The central and eastern offensives fared no better. The "army of the center" was commanded by General Stephen Van Rensselaer. Like General Hull, he was more of a political appointment, being a Federalist who supported the war effort, but also distrusted by the Republicans.[138] His army also suffered the same problems as the army in the west. On top of a lack of hard training his army lacked the necessary supplies for any military campaign. "Alarm

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[46] Hickey, 82.

[47] Borneman, 68.

[48] John C. Parish, *The Robert Lucas Journal of the War of 1812 during the Campaign under General William Hull.* (Iowa City, 1906), 65, (Robert Lucas, August 16, 1812).

[49] Borneman, 70.

pervades the country, and distrust among the troops. They are incessantly pressing for furloughs under every possible pretext. Many are without shoes; all clamorous for pay; many are sick… I receive no reinforcements of men, nor ordnance or munitions of war."[139] General Van Rensselaer himself was an amateur militia general with no combat experience. He often received assistance from his cousin, Lieutenant Colonel Solomon Van Rensselaer, who gained some experience fighting against the Indians. He was also supposed to share his command with Brigadier General Alexander Smyth of the regular army, who also had minuscule field experience. However, Smyth refused to share his command with a militia officer and place his men at his disposal.[140]

Their mission was to cross the Niagara River and cut the main west bank Portage Road between Lakes Erie and Ontario. This would cut off Upper Canada and prevent British forces from supporting their comrades against the main offensive under Dearborn from Lake Champlain.[141] The two cousins put together an army made up of militiamen, some of whom arrived with nothing more than old, ragged work clothes, their native dirt, and vicious appetites. Like the other states, the New York Militia lacked a staff organization and necessary supplies needed for any military function. General Dearborn was little to no help in this manner, lacking supplies himself and having little interest in Rensselaer's situation.[142] With less than 1,000 men, a few light cannons, and no trained artillerymen, his only logical course of action was to withdraw in the face of superior British forces. There was a brief truce between both armies and the Americans used the opportunity to resupply and gather reinforcements. By early August, Dearborn had about 1,700 men, half of them being untrained militia, between Albany and Plattsburg. [143]

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[50] Stephen Van Rensselaer, August 31, 1812, *Rensselaer Papers,* New York Archives.
[51] Hickey, 86.
[52] Elting, 38-39.
[53] Ibid, 39.
[54] Ibid, 40.

The Americans used this truce to their advantage, but Madison and Eustis pushed the two prongs to begin their campaigns. By early October, the American position along the Canadian border improved; troops and supplies began to arrive in large quantities, but General Dearborn was still pessimistic. General Rensselaer's army encamped itself behind Lewiston and Grand Niagara, two villages along the Niagara River. His forces increased to around 2,650 militia, 1,300 regulars, at Fort Niagara, and 1,650 more at Buffalo under Smyth's command.[144] The militia was enthusiastic for action, but also threatened to disband if Rensselaer did not launch an offensive. They soon got their wish.

General Rensselaer produced a plan of attack. Part of his army would attack directly across the Niagara River and take Queenston, cutting the Portage Road. A strong force of regulars would also move by boat, land by the rear of Fort George and attack its weaker front. The arrival of Smyth and his regiment created more problems than solutions. Rensselaer hoped to persuade Smyth to launch a coordinated attack against Fort George six miles north at the mouth of the river along Lake Ontario. Smyth declined the idea and what followed was what historian Walter Borneman described as the "indicative of the disorganization, muddled leadership, and ineffective chain of command that was to characterize most of the battles of the war."[145]

Rensselaer tried to attack Queenston on the night of October 10, but the man in charge of the boats, a "Lieutenant Sim," disappeared and took the oars with him. The men were still willing to fight, but they were fed up with the delays. Rensselaer tried again on October 12 after making some hasty improvements to fill in command spots. However, units kept arriving late and the crossing did not commence until four in the morning.[146] When the troops landed on the opposite

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Borneman, 72.
[57] Ibid.

shore they were immediately hit with enemy fire. Solomon Van Rensselaer was wounded six times in the skirmishes that ensued, and his men were pinned down under the heights leading up to Queenston.

Captain John E. Wool took over and led the 13th U.S. Infantry to the top of the heights through an unguarded fishing trail. General Isaac Brock, who returned to Fort George after the campaigns in the west, found out what was happening and went to the battlefield to lead an attack against the assault. Wool and his regiment charged against the redoubt at the top of the heights. Brock led a counter charge, but it did not work in his favor.[147] Brock was killed in the attack and reportedly urged the York Volunteers to push on in his final words. General Rensselaer appointed regular army Lieutenant Winfield Scott to support Wool. Scott had to secure his position against Brock's second-in-command, Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe, and the advancing Fort George garrison, 100 Mohawk Indians, and elements of the York Militia.[148]

At this point, General Rensselaer was confident in victory and ordered the New York Militia to reinforce Scott but, like the Ohio Militia under Hull, they too refused to leave American territory. Rensselaer was very surprised at the unit's refusal to assist the army. "To my utter astonishment, I found that at the very moment when complete victory was in our hands, the ardor of the unengaged troops had entirely subsided. I rode in all directions (and) urged men by every consideration to pass over, but in vain."[149] Scott, now on his own, was ordered to evacuate his position since reinforcements were not coming. He withdrew to the river's shores but did not find the promised boats. With the British taking the heights and the Americans pinned at the river, Scott

[58] J. Mackay Hitsman, *The Incredible War of 1812: A Military History,* (New York: Robin Brass, 1965), 94-96.

[59] Borneman, 74.

[60] Van Rensselaer to (Dearborn), October 14, 1812, WD (M221), reel 43.

was forced to surrender. The Battle of Queenston Heights ended with 300 Americans killed and about 1,000 captured compared to 100 British casualties.[150]

Madison and the Republicans were furious about the defeat and were quick to blame General Rensselaer. Some of the Republicans even accused him of informing the British of the attack. The general quickly asked to be relieved of duty, which was granted, and the War Department placed Alexander Smyth in charge, who quickly proved to be no better. He decided to attack Fort Erie further up the Niagara River, but he was quick with words and fell short on action.[151] Sounding more like a postal worker than a soldier, he boasted, "Neither rain, snow or frost will prevent the embarkation."[152] Even after securing enemy positions across the river, Smyth's officer voted down any further action after the Pennsylvania militia refused to cross the border.[153] Smyth was relieved of his command after the failed expedition and never received another army commission.

The offensive northward toward Lake Champlain proved to be just as ineffective. Most of the fighting occurred in the form of smaller battles and skirmishes. For example, a British force of the Provincial Marine was repulsed at Sacketts Harbor on July 19. Brigadier General Jacob J. Brown of the New York militia commanded the area between Oswego and Ogdensburg.[154] He believed Ogdensburg was a good base for attacks on British convoys moving along the St. Lawrence. He set up a post there along with Captain Benjamin Forsyth's rifle company. General Sir George Prevost, the governor general of Lower Canada, sent a force to dislodge them. Brown fired grapeshot at the British troops while they were still crossing the river until it failed. Despite

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[61] Hitsman, 98-100.
[62] Borneman, 75.
[63] General Orders of November 29, 1812, in Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier,* 4:313.
[64] Alexander Smyth to Henry Dearborn, December 4, 1812, in WD, (M221), reel 6.
[65] Elting, 52.

this success, the service enlistments ended in December for the militia, and they all went home at Christmas, leaving Forsyth and his riflemen to hold the town. [155]

Dearborn ignored the whole ordeal and Governor Daniel D. Tompkins of New York did not muster any new troops because of the road conditions and the risk of being caught by British patrols. With very little action happening around Lake Champlain, Dearborn seemed happy to sit in Albany assembling troops and supplies.[156] His subordinate, Brigadier General Joseph Bloomfield, was also very inactive at Plattsburg. Trouble began to stir when the British sent recruiters to a neutral Mohawk reservation and enlisted about eighty warriors and left a unit to solidify their influence. On October 12, (the same day as General Rensselaer's attack) American Major Guilford D. Young led a volunteer militia force to take the post. Initially he was successful but was later pushed back out in November by a company of the Glenbury Light Infantry Fencible Regiment.[157]

Dearborn finally got the courage to attack Montreal while Smyth kept the British busy along the Niagara River. He had a force of around 6,000 troops: seven regiments of regular infantry, some regular artillery, light dragoons, and a force of militia. He marched his army to the village of Champlain where they met up with Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry and his coalition of militia, Indian warriors, and voyageurs. Things soon went sour for Dearborn's troops. Bickering among the officers converted the militia to pacifism.[158] Too much time had gone by without any action and Eustis finally ordered Dearborn to march on Montreal. "Go to Albany or the Lake [Champlain]! The troops shall come to as fast as the season will admit, and the blow must

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[66] Ibid, 53.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Hitsman, 105.
[69] Elting, 54.

be struck. Congress must not meet without victory to announce to them."[159] Eustis did not get his wish and Dearborn marched his troops back to Plattsburg. Many contemporaries wrote the failure as a campaign of "miscarriage, without even the heroism of disaster."[160] General Dearborn offered to resign his commission, but Madison and Eustis refused.

The army's campaigns of 1812 ended in failure and the tone of the country began to change. Even War Hawk Henry Clay changed his tone. "Canada was not the end but the means, the object of the War being the redress of injuries, and Canada being the instrument by which that redress was to be obtained."[161] The army's performance made American military efforts along the Canadian border look ridiculous and comical in the eyes of the British. However, regimental officers were beginning to learn about their new, hard, and dangerous profession.[162]

As bad as the army's campaigns were along the Canadian border, the generals were not the only ones to blame. The situation was no better in Washington D.C., where the war was being conducted by Madison's War Department. Like the rest of the Republicans in Washington, Eustis was very confident in their cause, but perhaps a little too confident. "We can take Canada without soldiers, we have only to send officers to the province and the people… will rally to our standard."[163] As seen before, this was much easier said than done. When war was declared, an army of around 35,000 was called up for on paper, but there were fewer than 7,000 troops spread in all directions. Recruiting went very poorly and not all the states called up their militias, with the governors of the New England states refusing Madison's call.

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[70] SW to Dearborn, July 9, 1812, in Adams, *History,* 2:506-7.

[71] Ingersoll, *Historical Sketch,* 1:102

[72] James F. Hopkins, ed, *The Papers of Henry Clay,* vol. 1, The Rising Statesman, 1797-1814, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959), 825 (Clay to Bodley, December 18, 1812).

[73] Elting, 54.

[74] Tamsen Evans George, *Allegiance: The Life and Times of William Eustis,* (Whitman, MA: Riverhaven, 2021), 225.

Eustis had no experience conducting military affairs, being trained as a medical doctor. His orders were communicated to generals by mail, which could take up to a month or more to get replies. He still assumed that the generals knew what they were doing, however, this did not stop correspondence from piling up. This ranged from supply reports to military advice to petitions for appointments. The difficulties of coordinating with generals from different regions often took his full attention.[164] In June of 1812, he wrote to General Hull urging him to begin his expedition. "Circumstances have recently occurred which render it necessary you should pursue your march to Detroit with all possible expedition."[165] Hull later sent a second letter clarifying the declaration of war; however, he sent it through the regular mail instead of private courier that did not reach Hull before the British found out about the war. They continued their correspondence, relaying information about the predicaments into which General Hull blundered.[166]

The problems of Jeffersonian military policies became apparent when the campaigns on the Canadian border began. There was no chief-of-staff or command structure in the field armies or in the War Department. Eustis also did not make the responsibilities for his staff clear, and he also failed in creating an effective military bureaucracy.[167] The generals did not know who ranked over whom, especially between the regular army and the militia. General Dearborn even wrote Eustis asking, "Who is to have command of the operations in Upper Canada? I take it for granted that my command does not extend that far."[168] Despite his efforts, Eustis's ability to manage his correspondence with his generals continued to deteriorate. Getting supplies to the right place was difficult. The supply lines were often attacked and raided by Indians, and some even made it to the

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[75] George, 227.
[76] SW to Hull, June 18, 1812, *Eustis Papers,* LC.
[77] Hull to Eustis, August 8, 1812, "Documents Relating to Detroit."
[78] George, 227.
[79] General Dearborn to Secretary of War, June 1812, *Henry Dearborn Papers,* LC.

wrong place entirely. Different posts often waited for direct orders from Eustis regarding what to do with certain supplies. Half the time, he sent these straight to General Dearborn.

Eustis received reports like these from General Hull on how things were escalating in the region in early August. Eustis did very little to help Hull since he was unable to send reinforcements. Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry did not help with the dilemma at all since he "with the opinion of the judges of the Supreme Judicial Court, and the Governor of Connecticut (Roger Griswold)" refused to order the state militia into service with the regular army.[169] Meanwhile General Brock allied himself with Tecumseh's confederacy and laid siege to Fort Detroit, where Hull surrendered on in mid-August.

The news of Hull's defeat reached Washington at the end of the month and shocked the politicians who stayed during the summer. Many of them were overly critical of Hull and the way he conducted his operations. James Monroe dismissed him as "weak, indecisive, and pusillanimous."[170] The absence of many of Madison's cabinet did not help in turning the situation around. When Secretary of the Treasure Albert Gallatin learned about the fall of Detroit, he immediately went back to Washington, but Eustis and Monroe were the only ones there at the time. Both still lacked any information about the situation in the west. The War Department was aware of the threat the British and the Indians posed in the west, but the disorganization of the staff prevented any immediate solutions.[171]

Washington D.C. was aware of the events taking place later in the fall along the Niagara and St. Lawrence rivers but was too preoccupied with the election to do anything. The capital

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[80] William Hull to WE, August 7, 1812, *Hull Collection*, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University.

[81] Monroe to Madison, September 2 and 12, 1812, *Madison Papers,* LC

[82] Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, 211.

reacted similarly to General Rensselaer's defeats, blaming him for the failures and relieving him of his command. Only Dearborn was saved from the disgrace of 1812. Since he never engaged in large scale battle, there was little to cause political annoyance. He did not escape criticism because of his reluctance to attack, but he was able to keep his command since his lack of activity tarnished his reputation the least.[172] Dearborn's failure to act was also owed to the administration's failure to provide a clear command structure for the Niagara front. General Dearborn still made no attempt to justify his actions, or lack thereof. He expected receive "a full share of the blame," and requested to be relieved.[173] Madison insisted he stay, but it never changed the fact that Dearborn performed very poorly as a commander, even if his skills were never really tested.

Because of the military disasters along the Canadian border, the American people and Madison's cabinet lost confidence in Eustis since they "happened on his watch."[174] Henry Clay even lost faith in him saying, "the secretary of War (in whom already there unfortunately exists no short of confidence) cannot possibly shield Mr. Madison form the odium which will attend."[175] With all of the political tension and pressure from the public, Eustis resigned his post as Secretary of War in early January 1813.[176]

For the United States, the year 1812 ended on a sour note with the defeat of two armies and Dearborn's failure to attack Montreal. A Federalist newspaper in Vermont described it as a "blustering, bullying, mountain laboring campaign," that produced nothing but "an unbroken series of disaster, defeat, disgrace, and ruin and death."[177] Albert Gallatin wrote, "The series of misfortunes exceeds all anticipations made even by those who had least confidence in our

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[83] Monroe to Dearborn, December 18, 1812, LSMA.
[84] Dearborn to Eustis, December 11, 1812, LRRS.
[85] George, 230.
[86] Henry Clay to James Monroe, August 12, 1812.
[87] George, 236-37.
[88] Bennington, *Green Mountain Farmer,* January 13, 1813.

inexperienced and undisciplined soldiers."[178] The principal cause for these failures lay with poor leadership. The War Department stretched the already thinly spread-out army too far west, it failed to give proper instructions to field commanders, and most of the army's senior officers proved to be incompetent. Some of the junior officers, like Winfield Scott, showed promise and the infantry proved to be adequate, but they were still raw and had little battlefield experience. The militia was the biggest disappointment. Jefferson's "first line of defense," when forced to take the offensive, proved to be undisciplined, unreliable, and unwilling to leave American soil.[179] The Washington *National Intelligencer* said, "Volunteer militia are not precisely the species of force on which to rely for carrying on war, however competent they may be to repel invasion."[180] The campaigns along the Canadian border showed how hard it was to build in army practically overnight. The Philadelphia *Aurora* stated, "The degraded state in which the military institutions have been retained comes now upon us with a dismal sentence of retribution."[181]

However, the year was not a total loss. The American Navy held its own against the Royal Navy on the high seas. The American frigate USS *Constitution* defeated HMS *Guerriere* in August and HMS *Java* in December. USS *United States* also defeated HMS *Macedonian* in October. These victories did not strategically turn the war, but they did boost public morale. When 1813 came around, the Americans remained on the offensive. They did not even wait until the spring to launch a new campaign.

The first major campaign of 1813 was in the Michigan Territory under Hull's successor, William Henry Harrison. Harrison ordered his second-in-command, General James Winchester, to

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[89] Albert Gallatin to Thomas Jefferson, December 18, 1812, in Gallatin Papers (SR), reel 25.
[90] Hickey, 89.
[91] Washington *National Intelligencer,* December 22, 1812.
[92] Philadelphia *Aurora*, October 29, 1812.

march to the Maumee Rapids and Harrison told Winchester to not move any further than the rapids.[182] With reports of British forces in Frenchtown, however, Winchester ordered Lieutenant Colonel William Lewis with the 17th and 19th U.S. Infantry and Kentucky militia to march further north. Lewis arrived near Frenchtown on January 18th and attacked against a force of 200 militiamen and Indian warriors. Lewis was able to drive them out of the town and into the nearby woods.

News of the successful attack pushed Winchester to march north and join him. However, British colonel Henry Procter mobilized a force to move against Winchester consisting of Canadian militia, British regulars, and Indian warriors led by Chief Roundhead, totaling around 1,400. Winchester received a warning of the oncoming army from a friendly Canadian, but he dismissed it as a mere rumor.[183] He also did not bother deploying any sentries or patrols after dark. Harrison did little to help, but he approved of the advance, so they did not waste a good and much-needed victory. For their part, the Kentuckians were lame, sick, and lazy as the campaign progressed.[184]

Before dawn on January 22, British general Henry Proctor and his men moved toward Winchester's position and completely surprised the sleeping Americans. The Americans quickly moved into formation with the Kentuckians holding the American left flank while the regulars held the right. As stoutly as the Americans held their ground, Proctor's artillery soon took its toll, and the American troops began to flee back across the frozen River Raisin.[185] When fighting an enemy army supported by Indians, this was a fatal mistake and the warriors started running down

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[93] Elting, 59-60.
[94] Elting, 61.
[95] McAfee, 100.
[96] Ibid, 62.

the fleeing Americans. Many of the soldiers were butchered and scalped, and Winchester himself was captured and taken to Chief Roundhead. The chief had him stripped almost bare and then turned over to Proctor. After refusing a flag of truce and fighting for several more hours, the Kentuckians laid down their arms and surrendered after running low on ammunition. The battle ended with 359 Americans killed, eighty wounded, and 495 captured or missing.[186] The defeat and slaughter by the Indians lived in infamy as the River Raisin Massacre and "Remember the River Raisin" became a battle cry for American forces in the region.

The Americans suffered another defeat against at British hands offensive in Ogdensburg, New York. Seeking to secure supply lines in the area, British Lieutenant Colonel George McDonell led an attack on the small American company, about 520 men, in the town. The British charged across the frozen river and caught them by surprise. American riflemen in front of the fort fired at the oncoming attack with mixed results. The British forces continued to flank the Americans and pushed them further into the town. The American commander, Benjamin Forsyth, held with his riflemen and artillery, inflicting many casualties on the attackers.[187] The British soon overran them and the Americans retreated. Some militiamen surrendered or were captured. Others fled to nearby towns and hid among the civilians.

Meanwhile, in Washington, political shifts were beginning to change American strategy. James Monroe was eager for high military command and, with his experience in the Revolution, seemed like a good choice as Eustis's replacement. This was too much for northern Republicans to have southern politicians in complete control of Madison's cabinet, and the president had to pass him over. Madison eventually settled on John Armstrong Jr. of New Jersey.[188] Unlike Eustis,

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[97] Ibid, 62-63.
[98] Ibid, 104.
[99] Ibid, 65.

and many senior army officers, Armstrong was able to comprehend strategy, army organization, and the fact that politicians rarely make good field commanders. His service in the Revolution as Horatio Gates's aide-de-camp gave him experience in army administration. As ambassador to France from 1804-10, he had seen Napoleon's *Grand Armee* at the peak of its efficiency. He also studied the art of war and wrote extensively on it. This appointment created a significant strife between him and Monroe, who kept warning Madison that Armstrong was dangerous to the country and the Jeffersonian Republicans, especially for his part in the Newburg conspiracy. After taking office on January 13, Armstrong quickly learned that he had a large mess to clean up. Not only did he have to reorganize the army into a functional institution, but he also had to help develop and approve new campaigns to turn the war around. As he accepted his new responsibilities, not only was the war going terribly for the United States Army, but the British were also occupying and making advances into American territory.[189]

The first real victory for the army came later in the spring. The main strategy for the Americans was to attack Kingston along Lake Ontario. Instead, American generals move on York (now Toronto), the capital of Upper Canada, because it was less fortified. Dearborn and Commodore Isaac Chauncey believed destroying the British ships being built there would give them control of Lake Ontario and enhance their efforts further in the region.[190] This idea may have been sound, but York had no military value. If captured, Kingston would have provided a larger port for the American fleet on Lake Ontario, securing American dominance. It also would have given the Americans control of the St. Lawrence River and cut off British access to Montreal. Despite this, the Americans troops moved on York anyway. On April 25, Chauncey sailed from

[100] Ibid, 66.
[101] Hickey, 134.

Sackets Harbor with 1,800 soldiers and 800 sailors and marines. On the 27, they reached York, which was defended by 1,000 British regulars under Sir George Sheaffe and 50-100 Indians. Dearborn oversaw all the American land forces, but he stayed comfortably onboard Chauncey's flagship.

Among the senior officers in the American force was Brigadier General Zebulon Pike. Pike was a hard general who emphasized strict discipline and order in his unit. Before they landed on the beach, Pike warned his men that any looting would result in summary execution. After landing on the beach west of York, Major John Forsyth's riflemen led the charge. With help from Chauncey's cannon fire, the Americans drove off the Indians and forced the British troops to retreat east of the town.[191] When Pike's men approached the Government House the British were still flying their flag, which made Pike believe they aimed to fight. He ordered his troops to form and fight with bayonets, but he eventually let them rest while they waited for the artillery to arrive. As he questioned a British prisoner, the ammunition depot exploded and killed dozens of Americans unfortunate enough to be within 300 yards of it. Pike bent over to shield himself when a large stone hit his back, killing him. Whether the explosion was deliberately set off by the British or an accident, the American troops were infuriated. Sheaffe had already withdrawn his troops and told the militia to surrender. Afterwards, he set fire to the warship that was under construction.[192]

After the explosion, the Americans found what they believed was a scalp in one of the government buildings and started to loot the town. "Every house they found deserted was completely sacked."[193] After the looting was done, the government buildings were set on fire.

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[102] William Chewett to John Strachen, May 8, 1813, in Cruikshank*, Niagara Frontie*r, 5:192-202.

[103] A.J. Langguth, *Union 1812: The Americans Who Fought the Second War of Independence,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 233.

[104] Penelope Beikie; quoted in C.P. Stacey, *The Battle of Little York, (Toronto, 1977), 17.*

Dearborn, who was now ashore at this point, but did little to stop it until after he was approached by a local bishop.[194] Despite the causalities, York was still an important victory. A British vessel was captured, and another was destroyed along with many naval stores. It also allowed the Americans to gain partial control of Lake Ontario and made operations for the British on Lake Erie very difficult. "The ordnance ammunition and other stores for the service on Lake Erie were wither destroyed or fell into enemy hands when York was destroyed."[195] The Americans may have lost control in the looting, but it was the first victory for the army in the war. The army still had some work to do, but they were beginning to figure things out.

[105] Isaac Chauncey to SN, June 4, 1813, in ND (M125), reel 29.
[106] CG to SSWC, July 30, 1813, in Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier*, 6:256.

Chapter Three: When Washington Howled: Turning the War and Surviving 1814

As the army began its campaigns in 1813 against York and other areas, it was undergoing some drastic changes. Representative David R. Williams (JR-SC) spoke to Congress saying, "We ought not to calculate on peace, it has become more than ever necessary to prove that we will not only declare war, but can prosecute it with energy and courageous enterprise."[196] It was not just a matter of proving the United States could fight and win, but also showing they could fight with the same purpose and energy as the enemy. Representative George M. Troup (JR-GA) also commented, "The next campaign must be opened with vigor and prosecuted to success."[197] Realizing the problems was one thing but fixing them was another. Luckily, Congress began initiatives to fix these issues while Harrison was organizing his smaller campaigns in the Ohio territory in the winter of 1813.

To fix the recruiting problem, Congress passed laws to raise army pay, since the reimbursement was small and made army life unattractive. For example, privates in the army were paid $5 a month, then it was raised to $8. The size of the regular army was also raised from its 35,000-troop limit in 1812 to 57,000 in 1813. Congress also approved several measures to improve army efficiency. The number of staff officers was increased, some even being assigned to field armies. To keep track of supplies, Congress appointed a superintendent general of military stores and ordered all supply trains to make quarterly reports. Secretary of War John Armstrong also drew up a new code of regulations that properly defined the respective duties of army departments. This new code titled "Rules and Regulations of the Army of the United States" was first published on May 1, 1813. It was well-received and governed army origination and procedures for years

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[1] Speech of David R. Williams, Dec. 29, 1812, in AC, (12-2), 461-62.
[2] Speech of George M. Troup, Dec. 30, 1812, in AC, (12-2), 476.

after the war.[198] Not long into his service as Secretary of War, Armstrong had already proved himself as a more competent person for the job.

While the army was going through some of its early reforms, the American generals were also planning new strategies to accomplish their old objective: the taking of Canada. The main strategy moved away from capturing strongpoints like Montreal and Quebec because of how well fortified they were. American forces focused instead on controlling the Great Lakes by taking key targets in Upper Canada, including places like York and Kingston. Throughout the summer of 1813, the American army experienced a series of victories and defeats.[199] Shortly after the Battle of York, the Americans evacuated the town and the British pursued them and laid siege to Fort Meigs (now Toledo, Ohio). After eight days of skirmishes, bombardment, and Indian allies leaving, the British abandoned the siege on May 9, much to the relief of the Canadian militia who were eager to return to their farms. The Americans won another victory when they repulsed a British army and naval attack at Sackets Harbor later in May.[200]

American arms were less fortunate at the battles of Stoney Creek and Beaver Dams in Upper Canada. However, they enjoyed success in pushing back British attacks at Craney Island and St. Michaels during the early raids in the Chesapeake in June. A major victory came on September 10, 1813, when Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's fleet defeated the British fleet on Lake Erie. The Battle of Lake Erie gave the United States supremacy on the lake for the remainder of the war and forced the British to abandon most of the forts in the Michigan territory, saving the Northwest from potential invasion.[201]

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[3] Hickey, 109-110.
[4] Ibid, 124.
[5] Ibid, 126 and 136.
[6] Ibid, 130-31.

Much of the American successes can be contributed to the change in leadership. Many of the older generals were being replaced with younger ones who were eager to fight. These younger men took the task of organizing their units very seriously to avoid the mishaps of 1812. General Henry Dearborn was even relieved of his command after the surrender of another American force at Beaver Dams.[202] The men who replaced him proved to be more competent and daring than he ever was in 1812. Jacob Brown was one of these commanders. Brown was a Brigadier General in the New York militia and was given a commission of the same rank in the regular army after the victory at Sackets Harbor. Winfield Scott also proved himself as a capable field commander. After he was released from British custody,[203] he demonstrated outstanding courage during a successful assault on Fort George where he was wounded in his collar bone but kept fighting. Armstrong appointed Scott as Dearborn's adjunct, equivalent to a modern chief of staff.[204] Upon his appointment, Scott began to make changes to 'Army of the North.' He used his knowledge of organization and operations of Napoleon's Grande Armée to form an adequate staff, straighten out the administration, and prepare for the next campaign.[205] These men were still figuring things out as the war moved along, but their efforts proved successful in future campaigns.

Another important commander in the conflict was William Henry Harrison. He was one of the older generals, and despite his failure in late 1812, he still had a great reputation form his victory at Tippecanoe. Harrison had plenty of experience fighting the Indians, so he was still seen as a commander capable in wilderness fighting. With the defeat of the British fleet on Lake Erie, Harrison saw an opportunity to pursue the retreating British army. The British commander, Henry

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[7] Borneman, 111.

[8] Scott had previously been captured during General Stephen van Rensselaer's failed attack on Queenston Heights and spent several months in British custody.

[9] Elting, 120.

[10] Ibid.

Procter, was slow in his movements, caring more about his baggage carts than making a stand against the Americans. Tecumseh and his warriors opposed his retreat and even compared him to "a fat animal that carries its tail upon its back, but when affrighted… drops it between his legs and evens off."[206] As Harrison advanced his forces into Canada, Kentucky Governor Isaac Shelby answered his call for reinforcements in the form of 3,000 militiamen commanded by the governor himself to a rendezvous at the Detroit River. Shelby swayed his men after assuring them he would "lead you to the field of battle and share with you the dangers and honors of the campaign."[207] Many of these men brought their own horses and supplies and around 1,200 of them mounted into a cavalry unit led by Colonel Richard M. Johnson.[208]

With a total force of 5,500 troops, Harrison began his invasion in late September 1813, this time with the militia following the regulars into Canada. Procter's slow retreat played to Harrison's advantage as he captured abandoned supplies and even a couple of gunboats carrying ammunition. Procter started to see his dire situation and opted to make a stand near Moraviantown along the Thames River. The British general had about 800 regulars and 500 Indians. The British extended in two thin lines from the river to a large swamp while the Indians, led by Tecumseh, took positions in the underbrush near the swamp on the British right flank.[209] Harrison approached Procter's forces with about 3,000 men (likely leaving some behind to hold Amherstburg) and organized his units for an attack.

Harrison knew a direct attack against the British would leave his left flank open for an attack from Tecumseh.[210] Instead he ordered Lewis Cass (now a Brigadier General) and his brigade

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[11] Speech of Tecumseh, September 18, 1813, in Niles *Register* 5 (Nov. 6, 1813), 175.
[12] Shelby to Kentucky militia, July 30, 1813, in Washington *National Intelligencer,* August 18, 1813.
[13] Hickey, 131.
[14] Ibid, 132.
[15] Borneman, 159.

of regulars down the road to strike the British while Governor Shelby and his Kentucky militia covered their left flank against the Indians. Harrison had Johnson and his men stay in reserve. Johnson, however, saw how weak the British lines were and proposed to charge with his cavalry. Harrison's knowledge of Napoleonic tactics was very limited and believed the idea was very unusual but accepted it anyway.[211] Harrison said, "The American backwoodsmen ride better in the woods than any other people. I was persuaded too that the enemy would be quite unprepared for the shock that they could not resist it."[212]

After lining up his troops, the men shouted, "Remember the River Raisin" and charged straight into the British lines. The right wing was led by James Johnson, Colonel Richard Johnson's brother, who burst through the British lines, dismounted, and caught the British in a deadly crossfire, forcing them to surrender.[213] Procter managed to escape, but there was nothing he could have done to save the day. An American officer commented saying, "It is really a novel thing that raw militia stuck upon horses, with muskets in their hands instead of sabers, should be able to pierce the British lines with such complete effect."[214] Colonel Johnson led the left wing against Tecumseh and his warriors. During the engagement he received a few severe wounds, but nothing that was fatal. He then killed an Indian chief that was charging at him whom he believed to be Tecumseh. When word of Tecumseh's death began to spread around the battlefield, the Indians fell into disarray and fled into the woods.[215] After about thirty minutes the Battle of the Thames ended as a great American success with less than forty American casualties. The British suffered

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[16] Elting, 112.
[17] Harrison to SW, October 9, 1813, in WD (M222), reel 18.
[18] Elting, 114.
[19] Robert B. McAfee, *History of the Late War in the Western Country.* (New York: 1816), 396-97.
[20] Hickey, 132.

twenty-eight officers and 606 enlisted killed or captured. General Procter was court martialed for the defeat and never received another command.

With Tecumseh dead, his warriors lost all spirit of preserving themselves and his confederacy fell apart. After the Battle of the Thames, the Indians never again posed a serious threat in the Northwest Territory. Soon afterwards, the American forces were able to recover Detroit and most of the territory lost in 1812. Being the last major campaign of the year, with the victory on Lake Erie, the American army was able to celebrate 1813 as a success.[216] The Treaty of Greenville was signed in July 1814, negotiating peace between the northwestern tribes and the United States. The treaty ended the fighting with the Indians and established reservations in the area, which were quickly engulfed as the United States expanded.

Harrison was not the only one fighting a cohort of Indian tribes at this time. In the Southeast, in what is now Alabama, Major General Andrew Jackson was fighting a smaller war against a coalition of Indians led by hostile Creeks. Many of the older Creek chiefs accepted the dominion of the United States. The younger chiefs, at the urging of Tecumseh, formed a group of Indians to resist American expansion. These warriors became known as Red Sticks because of the red war clubs they carried. At the time, Jackson was in the Tennessee militia, but he was eager to volunteer for the war. Early pleas for a command were initially passed over in Washington, likely because of his testimony for Aaron Burr during his trial for alleged insurrection.[217] However, with fear of a Spanish threat from Florida provided by the British, the War Department ordered Tennessee Governor Willie Blount to send 1,500 volunteers to New Orleans to strengthen the southern frontier.

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[21] Elting, 114-15.
[22] Borneman, 136-38.

Blount had close ties with Jackson and put him in command of the western Tennessee militia and United States volunteers.[218] Upon hearing of the northern militias refusals to invade Canada, Jackson assured William Eustis, "If the Government orders," they would, "rejoice at the opportunity of placing the American eagle on the ramparts of Mobile, Pensacola, and Fort St. Augustine, effectively banishing from the southern coasts all British influence."[219] Jackson moved his forces south in January 1813. They arrived at Natchez (now in Mississippi) when they received orders from the commander at New Orleans to go no further. In March that year, Jackson was ordered to disband his forces. Rather than have his men transferred to James Wilkinson, a rival of Jackson from a previous duel, Jackson used his own money to march his men back to Nashville.[220]

Months went by while Jackson waited for new orders, getting into another duel as a second for one of his officers during this time. Jackson was wounded in the encounter and carried the bullet in his chest for the rest of his life. He was in weak condition, with his arm even in a sling, when he heard about a terrible massacre.[221] During Jackson's time in Nashville, smaller American forces already began engaging with the Red Sticks, who were receiving supplies from Spanish Florida. The Mississippi territory and Georgia responded to the raids in the southeast by sending in their militias. The first shots of the Creek War were fired on July 27, 1813, when 180 Mississippi militia and volunteers attacked a baggage train for the Red Sticks eighty miles outside Pensacola. The Battle of Burnt Corn, as it later became known as, had very light casualties and the Americans left with most of the baggage train. The battle however, emboldened the Red resolve and turned a civil war between the Creeks into a larger conflict with the United States.[222]

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[23] Ibid, 138.
[24] James Parten, *Life of Andrew Jackson,* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), Vol. 1, 377-81.
[25] Borneman, 139-40.
[26] Ibid, 142.
[27] Hickey, 147.

In retaliation for Brunt Corn, the Red Sticks attacked Fort Mims, a small post just north of Mobile. The fort had about 300 people living inside it, including 120 militiamen under Major Daniel Beasley of the regular army. Beasley did not take the Indian threats seriously and therefore neglected to prepare the fort for an attack. The Americans received a warning about an oncoming attack but ignored it and were caught off guard as the Red Sticks stormed the fort. The Indians, led by William Weatherford (also known as Red Eagle), lost about 100 warriors in the assault while slaughtering around 300 Americans, many of them women and children.[223] Weatherford tried to stop the slaughter but to no avail. "My warriors were like famished wolves and the first taste of blood made their appetites insatiable."[224] A few managed to escape, but those who were captured were sold as slaves.[225] The American public was shocked and outraged as news of the massacre spread throughout the country. One settler wrote, "Our settlement is overrun and our country, I fear, is on the eve of being depopulated."[226] Just as the River Raisin Massacre increased tensions in the northwest, so did Fort Mims increase tensions in the southeast.

When Jackson heard about the tragedy, he mobilized up his forces in Nashville and began to march south once again. The strategy was to take four volunteer armies to attack the heart of the Creek Nation and meet up at their 'holy ground' where the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers joined. The militia from east Tennessee under General John Cocke would march south and meet up with Jackson in northern Alabama. The combined forces, under Jackson, would continue south and converge with the Georgia militia under General John Floyd and the 3 U.S. Army Regiment and

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[28] Ibid, 147-48.

[29] Quoted in John F. H. Claiborne, *Life and Times of Gen. Sam Dale, The Mississippi Partisan,* (New York: 1860), 128-29.

[30] Hickey, 148.

[31] Harry Toulmin to Raleigh *Register*, September 7, 1813.

Mississippi volunteers under General Ferdinand L. Claiborne.[227] Much like the northern campaigns of 1812, the results were unsatisfactory initially.

Jackson was never one to show much patience and started to move independently as Cocke moved slowly. Jackson assembled his troops at Fort Strother along the Coosa River. He sent Lieutenant John Coffee to attack the Red Stick town of Tallushatchee. Jackson's hope was to make a decisive blow against his opponents before his men's enlistments expired and rally other Creek settlements against Weatherford.[228] Coffee approached the town on November 3 with about 900 cavalry and mounted rifleman. He lured the Indians into battle by feigning a retreat. The warriors followed them and when they reached their main lines, a battle ensued. Coffee's flanks advanced to attack inward and surround the warriors. When it was over, 186 Red Sticks were killed compared to five Tennesseans. The battle encouraged some Creek settlements to side with the Americans, much to the delight of Jackson.[229]

In Jackson's eyes, Fort Mims had been avenged. He wrote to Governor Blount, "We have retaliated for the destruction of Fort Mims."[230] After the battle, Jackson and his troops hunkered down at Fort Strother, anxiously awaiting supplies and reinforcements. On November 7, a friendly Creek told Jackson the Red Sticks had gathered at Talladega to destroy the village. The militia left Fort Strother at midnight and advanced in three columns so if attacked they could quickly form a square to defend themselves. Jackson and his troops arrived near Talladega later that evening, but he received word that General James White received orders from Cocke to withdraw to the Chataga

[32] Borneman, 146.
[33] Ibid, 147.
[34] Ibid.
[35] AJ to Blount, November 4, 1813, *Jackson Papers,* LC.

Creek, leaving Jackson on his own. Concerned for the safety of Fort Strother, Jackson launched an immediate attack on their opponents.[231]

The attack started at four in the morning on November 9. The infantry advanced in two columns with the militia on the left and volunteers on the right. The cavalry and mounted riflemen formed two columns on the flanks and fanned out in a crescent shaped curve with 250 cavalrymen waiting in reserve. The advance guard, commanded by Colonel William Carroll, was ordered to press forward, engage, and fall out back to the center to draw out the enemy. The mounted troops on the flanks would then encircle the warriors by uniting their columns, eliminating their escape route. The strategy worked until the feigned retreat, when the screaming warriors scared off some of the militiamen. Jackson responded by ordering the reserves to dismount and fill in the gaps. Once the warriors were encircled the troops began firing at them from point blank range.[232] During the attack, the cavalry and infantry left a hole open on the right flank, allowing some of the Indians to escape.

When the battle was over, about 300 warriors were dead on the battlefield, with many more running into the hills. Jackson won the battle but missed an opportunity to eliminate the Red Sticks because of the break in the line. "Had there been no departure from the original order of battle not an Indian would have escaped."[233] After gathering his dead and wounded, Jackson moved to lift the siege on Talladega and was welcomed in the village as a hero. Not too long after, Jackson and his men marched back to Fort Strother. Upon returning, Jackson began to face many problems.

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[36] Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and his Indian Wars,* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 65-66.
[37] Remini, *Andrew Jackson and his Indian Wars,* 66.
[38] AJ to Blount, November 13, 1813, Jackson *Correspondence*, vol. I, 349.

The forces under Floyd and Claiborne had success and failure while battling the Red Sticks, but were unable to rendezvous with Jackson, essentially leaving him isolated.[234] Jackson also faced disciplinary issues with his own men. With supplies dwindling and his troops enlistments ending, the Tennesseans grew restless as they waited to return home. On November 17, Jackson led his men to Fort Deposit to retrieve some supplies. After seeing a supply train just outside the fort, the troops helped themselves. Jackson ordered them to march back to Fort Strother, but his men grew disgruntled and moved on to Nashville. Jackson himself rode ahead of his troops and met up with General Coffee and his cavalry. He ordered the men to stand in the road and shoot anyone who dared to march on. When the troops reached him, they saw the determination in his eyes and reluctantly turned back. Upon returning to Fort Strother, Jackson faced a bigger munity. An entire brigade was ready to desert, and Jackson was forced to stop them and maintain order. Still recovering from his duel, he grabbed a musket, rested the barrel on his horse, and stood in front of the column threatening to shoot anyone who moved forward. After a long period of silence, General Coffee and Major John Reid took positions on either side of Jackson and were followed by some loyal companies who aimed their guns at the mutineers. Seeing their commander was not going to break, the men dispersed back to their posts.[235]

The confrontation made a deep impact on the Jacksons troops. An observer noted, "It is very certain, that, but for the firmness of the general, at this critical moment, the campaign would for present have been broken up and would probably never have been recommenced."[236] Jackson had a repeat of this on December 9, this time aiming light artillery at them. The men again dispersed back to their posts, but Jackson realized he could not hold his men for much longer and

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[39] Borneman, 148.
[40] Remini, 70-71.
[41] John Henry Eaton and John Reid, *The Life of Andrew Jackson,* (New York: 1817), 69-17.

eventually allowed them to return home, however reluctantly.[237] By the new year, only Jackson and one regiment remained in the fort, and the enlistments for them were due to expire. On January 14, 1814, when things seemed to be in the deepest of gloom, 850 new recruits came to the fort, sent by Governor Blount. Despite his relief, Jackson did not wait to see how skilled these men were and marched them straight into Creek territory to fight the Red Sticks.[238]

He targeted the heavily fortified Tohopeka, or Horseshoe Bend, on the Tallapoosa River. He rested a few miles from the Red Stick's encampment at Emuckfaw Creek on January 21. The Red Sticks attacked at dawn the next day and quickly drove off the Americans. Jackson's quick retreat to Fort Strother kept them from being slaughtered. As they crossed the Enotachopo Creek, the Indians began firing at the soldiers in the water.[239] Jackson saw what was happening and ordered the rear guard to engage the Creeks while also ordering the left and right columns to move around, recross the creek and surround the Red Sticks. The maneuver did not go the way he hoped as Jackson later commented, "But to my astonishment and mortification…I beheld… the rear guard precipitately give way. This shameful retreat was disastrous in the extreme."[240] Jackson managed to reform his columns on the other side of the creek and, after a while, the Red Sticks withdrew.

After the returning to Fort Strother, Jackson's men began to see him as a hero. He proved himself as a capable commander, despite not having any formal military training. He may not have won the battle, but unlike the northern commanders in 1812, Jackson was able to retreat in an orderly manner and keep his army largely intact. After the battle, he spent the next several weeks

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[42] Remini, 72-73.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid, 73.
[45] AJ to Thomas Pickney, January 29, 1814, Jackson *Correspondence,* vol. I, 448-501.

training and drilling the recruits into a more efficient force. He imposed strict discipline and harsh punishments to those who disobeyed orders or attempted to desert. He also banned the importation of whiskey and worked to improve the road between Forts Strother and Deposit.[241] It was here the Andrew Jackson of American legend was forged. He was fierce, disciplined, stubborn, and left little to no room for error. It was also here where he earned his nickname, Old Hickory. Jackson may have been a militia general, but he had the mindset and attitude of a regular army officer willing to disregard militia tradition.

During these weeks, Jackson trained his army to end the Red Stick threat in the Southeast. With the arrival of the 39th U.S. Infantry and additional volunteers from Tennessee in the late winter of 1814, Jackson had about 5,000 well-trained and disciplined men to deploy. Jackson looked to attack Horseshoe Bend again and after defeating the Red Sticks, move on the Holy Ground (named Ecunchate by the Indians), the sacred meeting place of the Creeks. Jackson began the campaign on March 14, with 2,000 infantry, 700 cavalry and mounted riflemen, and 600 Indian allies. Horseshoe Bend was a wooded peninsula and was almost entirely enclosed by a looping action of the Tallapoosa River. The bluff protected the fort at the river and the other end had breastworks made of trees and timber laid horizontally. The height varied between five and eight feet and had two rows of portholes to give the defenders better direction of fire. The breastwork was also in a zigzag shape to expose attackers to crossfire.[242]

The Americans reached the bend on March 27 and Jackson told his men "you must be cool and collected… you must execute commands with deliberations and aim. Let every shot tell." He also warned them, "any officer or soldiers who flees before the enemy without being expelled to

[46] Remini, 74.
[47] Ibid, 75.

do so by superior force and actual necessity shall suffer death."[243] Jackson saw the breastworks of the fort and pondered its defenses. The complexity of the defenses proved to Jackson and his troops the Red Sticks were receiving aid from the Spanish and British, but he decided to use this to his advantage. To block any potential escape route, Jackson ordered General Coffee with his cavalry and 500 Cherokee and 100 friendly Creeks to cross the Tallapoosa and occupy the other side of the river from the bend. The Indian allies also swam across the river and took the enemy canoes. With the peninsula surrounded, the fort now virtually became a prison with no way of escape.[244]

Jackson ordered an artillery barrage, which was absorbed harmlessly by the breastwork. A couple of hours later, the Indian allies and Coffee's men crossed the river near the bluff to attack the rear. This gave Jackson the distraction he needed and ordered his men to charge the fort. "Never were men more eager to be led to a charge than both regulars and militia. They had been waiting with impatience to receive the order and hailed it with acclamation."[245] The troops rushed the fort under a hailstorm of bullets and arrows. Major Lemuel P. Montgomery jumped on top of the breastwork to push his men forward where he was shot in the head and fell dead. Ensign Sam Houston took his place and repeated the motion as he was shot in the thigh by an arrow. Ignoring the wound, he jumped into the compound and was followed by many regulars. Minutes later, the breastwork was breached by the full scale of the infantry. The Red Sticks fought fiercely but were soon overwhelmed since all escape routes were cut off. When the troops had control of the battle, they began to torch the village. Many of the Red Sticks ran for their canoes only to be gunned down by General Coffee's men.[246]

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[48] General Orders, March 24, 1814.
[49] Remini, 76.
[50] AJ to Pickney, March 28, 1814, Jackson *Correspondence,* vol. I, 491.
[51] Remini, 77-78.

For five hours the killing at Horseshoe Bend "continued until it was suspended by the darkness of the night."[247] The killing started again the next morning as more Indians were flushed out of their hiding spots. The Battle of Horseshoe Bend ended with around 850 Red Sticks dead compared to twenty-six Americans, eighteen Cherokee, and five friendly Creeks. Jackson praised his men for their bravery and patriotism and even singled out Major Montgomery and the 39th regiment for their efforts.[248] Although the Red Sticks were defeated, and as far as Jackson was concerned the Creek War was over, he still believed not all the hostile Indians were defeated. That being the case, he always made sure he and his men were ready.

In the weeks that followed, Jackson built Fort Jackson on the ruins of an old French fortress, Fort Toulouse, closer to Mobile. The Creek War officially ended in August 1814, with the Treaty of Fort Jackson. The treaty ceded around 36,000 square miles of Creek territory to the United States. This upset many of the friendly Creeks, but they realized there was little they could do about it.[249] The main Red Stick leader, William Weatherford, lived out the rest of his life as a respected planter in Alabama.[250] The campaign ended with Jackson and the Tennessee volunteers emerging into American legend. Jackson was now in the books as a competent disciplined commander whom Washington would look to hold the frontier. Jackson's victory over the Creeks, along with Perry's and Harrison's victories in the Northwest, increased the security of the American west. However, since these victories were in remote regions, they did close to nothing to change the war against Great Britain. The United States had still made no headway to strengthen

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[52] AJ to Blount, March 31, 1814, Jackson *Correspondence,* vol. I, 492.

[53] Remini, 79.

[54] David S. Hiedler and Jeanne T. Heidler, *Old Hickory's War: Andrew Jackson and the Quest for Empire,* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stockpile Books, 1996), 22-23.

[55] Hickey, 151.

their foothold in Canada. By 1814, Canada remained in British hands and victory in the war as remote as it was at the end of 1812.[251]

In the northern campaigns, the army continued to transform itself. Many of these efforts were contributed through the vigorous training and leadership of Winfield Scott. Scott proved himself as a capable officer in the early campaigns of the war. His role in the capture of Fort George gave him national recognition and he was promoted to Brigadier General in January 1814, at the age of twenty-seven.[252] Jacob Brown received his new commission at around the same time and was the senior officer along the Niagara frontier. There is no doubt Scott's age kept him from being in full command, but he was more than happy with his new position. The two gentlemen got along harmoniously, and their efforts transformed the United States Army.

When Scott arrived in Albany, he immediately set up a training camp to train the new recruits. He started by organizing daily routines such as outposts, night patrols, guards, sentinels, sanitation, policing, rules of civility, and courtesy.[253] To show his troops how serious he was, he made an example of five men convicted of desertion. Four were executed, one was spared. Scott drilled his troops seven to ten hours a day for ten weeks. One of the recruits recorded some of the routine in his journal:

> In the morning after breakfast, every sergeant exercised his squad of from twelve to twenty men, in the various evolutions, for one hour. Captains drilled their companies from 11-12 and at 1 or 2 o'clock PM, the whole brigade, with all its officers, musicians and privates, under the command of General Winfield Scott, the most thorough disciplinarian I ever saw, were drilled for 3-4 hours. These exercises, continued daily, for more than two months, could not fail to make us well

[56] Ibid.

[58] John S.D. Eisenhower, *Agent of Destiny: The Life and Times of General Winfield Scott,* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 75.

[59] Eisenhower, *Agent of Destiny,* 76.

> acquainted with our business as soldiers and fit us for the contests which were expected during the summer in the enemy's country.[254]

Scott ran the tactical instruction of each arm from using a copy of the French *Reglement,* beginning with the officers. He conducted this training himself, even running the drills in his full-dress uniform and ready to work up to ten hours a day. When he believed his officers were sufficient at these maneuvers, he supervised the instruction of their men. This went on until the summer of 1814 and Scott was pleased with the results.[255] "I have a handsome little army… The men are healthy, sober, cheerful, and docile. The field officers highly respectable, and many of the platoon officers were decent and emulous of improvement."[256]

General Brown left the training to Scott and when he returned to Buffalo on June 5, he was ready to begin a new campaign. The army crossed the Niagara River on July 3 early in the morning. The American forces were able to capture Fort Erie at little cost and moved onto the Chippewa River. British Major General Phineas Riall learned about the American landing and led a force of 2,500 troops to intercept, picking up additional forces along the way. After some skirmishing on July 4, Brown arrived at Streets Creek. He realized the only approach to Riall's position was to outflank his right by crossing the Chippewa River west of his line. This required making a quick bridge, which would take too long. Because of this delay, Scott believed there would be no action on the 5th, but he was proven wrong.[257]

After narrowly escaping a band of Indians, Scott readied his brigade for a long march. At about 4 pm, after crossing Streets Creek, General Brown rode up to Scott's brigade and informed

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[60] "The memoir of Drummer Jarvis Frary Hanks, 11th infantry, 1813-1815," in Donald E. Graves, *Soldiers of 1814: American Enlisted Men's Memoirs of the Niagara Campaign,* (Youngstown, NY: Old Fort Niagara Association, 1995), 29-31.

[61] Eisenhower, 78

[62] Scott to Winder, May 6, 1814, *Ohio State Journal.*

[63] Eisenhower, 81-82.

him about Riall's forces. With about 2,000 men, Scott was confident in his well-trained troops and was ready to face the British on equal footing.[258] Both generals began to advance in the open field as the British fired 24-pound shots and 5.5 howitzer rounds at the American lines, which did not faze Scott's brigade in the slightest. According to reports, most that seem accurate, when Riall saw the Americans marching in grey uniforms, he believed he was facing a company of militia. When he saw them passing unflinching through his artillery in an organized manner General Riall shouted, "Those are Regulars, by God!" The American were wearing grey uniforms, but because they were low on materials for the regulation blue, not to purposefully deceive the enemy as commonly thought.[259]

General Nathaniel Towson moved his artillery to Scott's right flank and quickly began putting the British cannons out of action. During the artillery duel, both sides lined up for battle. Scott lined up his brigade with the 22nd Regiment on his right flank next to Towson, the 9th and 11th in the center, and the 25th on his left. Riall had his regiments in columns and, with the militia and Indians running for the woods, ordered his right flank forward meeting a heavy blaze of American musketry. General Riall's maneuver was never finished. Scott moved his flanks forward so the unit was in a U shape. Riall's troops got caught in a murderous crossfire and cut to pieces under Towson's barrage.[260]

Afterwards Scott ordered a charge to show the British the Americans could use the bayonet just as well as they could shoot. In minutes, the British columns collapsed, and they scampered across the Chippewa River. The Battle of Chippawa lasted about a half hour, and it changed the way Britain saw the Americans. Scott's forces met and broke Riall's army in an open field battle.

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[64] Ibid, 82-83.
[65] Elting, 186.
[66] Ibid.

The British suffered 148 killed, 221 wounded and forty-six captured or missing. Scott had forty-four killed and 224 wounded. Had Scott waited for reinforcements under General Ripley, he may have been able to wipe out Riall's entire force. Even without Ripley, his boldness and maneuvering caused catastrophic damage to the British army. News of the victory brought on a surge of national pride to the United States as the American Army won its first victory against a British force of equal size.[261]

Shortly after, General Brown moved his army across the river. He hoped to have support from Commodore Isaac Chauncey's squadron on Lake Ontario, but Chauncey fell violently ill and, as usual, was slow and reluctant to be at the mercy of the army. Brown wanted the naval support to protect his supply line, but he was still determined to attack with or without Chauncey's help. Skirmishes occurred in the days that followed, but no major battle broke out between the two armies.[262] In late July, British Lieutenant General Drummond arrived at Fort George with reinforcements after the Americans abandoned it in December 1813. Drummond was equally determined to engage his opponent and sent 1,600 troops to establish a position at Lundy's Lane. Brown was unaware of Drummond's presence, but when he did become aware, he decided to move on the offensive.[263]

Brown sent Scott's troops, Towson's artillery, and few cavalrymen, around 1,100 men total, towards Queenston along the Portage Road. On July 25, Scott saw two British officers come out of a tavern overlooking Niagara Falls. Scott went to investigate, and the owner told him a British force of 1,100 troops and two cannons was gathering at Lundy's Lane. Scott remained skeptical because he was convinced General Riall and his troops were marching to Fort Schlosser

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[67] Ibid, 187.
[68] Hickey, 189.
[69] Elting, 190.

on the other side of the river. He pushed ahead to attack what he believed was a "remnant" force in front of him and marched his men into an ambush. The British position ran along the top of a rise high enough to provide observations in all directions. The British left flank laid on the Portage Road to Queenston that extended to a church for about 100 yards. By the church there was an open field with little to no cover. Here, Scott was trapped by fire from three directions.[264]

With Scott trapped, he knew retreat was not an option. He decided to attack Riall's position from the south across a large clearing. Riall was impressed with Scott's aggressive move and believed a larger force was in action. He then ordered Colonel Thomas Pearson to evacuate his position and sent word to Colonel Hercules Scott to return to Twelve Mile Creek. By then, General Drummond arrived with reinforcements, bringing the total British force to 3,000 and deployed them along the hilltop. Scott's situation worsened and his men were trapped along the base at the hill and could not move without facing slaughter. Scott messaged General Brown for reinforcements and by the time they arrived Scott had about 400 effectives out of his original 1,300.[265] Major Thomas Jesup and the 25th Infantry saved Scott's brigade from total annihilation. Jesup pushed forward along a narrow pathway where he found the Canadian militia along the Portage Road. Undetected, Jesup and his men fired a point-blank volley and made a bayonet charge that ripped the Canadians apart. He then found and subdued a group of mounted British troops, one of them being General Riall, who was severely wounded in the arm.[266] However, Jesup was "so burdened with prisoners as to render it impossible to convoy my intentions into execution

[70] Eisenhower, 89.
[71] Ibid, 90-91.
[72] Ibid, 91.

without first putting the prisoners to death."[267] Jesup had little choice but to let the prisoners leave, which Scott later appreciated.

When General Brown arrived at about 9 pm, his first instinct was to relieve Scot and place his men in reserve. After evaluating the situation, Scott believed with so many of his officers down the rank-and-file lost cohesion. Brown instead combined all the regiments, except for Jesup's, into one battalion under Major Henry Leavenworth. Scott was placed in a supporting role under Brigadier General Eleazer Ripley. Now General Brown had a force of 1,900 to Drummond's 2,600. Brown decided the next phase of action was to take the British cannons and ordered Ripley to lead the assault.[268] Ripley split the brigade into two wings, leading the 23rd Infantry himself on the right. The 21st under Colonel James Miller was sent straight across the churchyard. Miller delivered a volley of musket fire at close range then overran the gunners with a bayonet charge. Even British veterans from the Napoleonic wars commented favorably on the effectiveness of the charge. "The Americans charged to the very muzzles of our cannons and actually bayoneted the artillerymen who were at their guns."[269] The British tried to retake them but were unsuccessful.

With his men reorganized, Scott was anxious to get back in action. He moved the troops to reinforce Jesup's position on the right flank. As Scott and Jesup moved forward, Scott was shot in the shoulder by a musket ball that shattered his bone. Scott was alive, but in no condition to lead, so he was carried off the field. At about the same time, General Brown was wounded by a Congreve rocket, leaving Ripley as the commander. As he was carried off the field Brown ordered Major

[73]Jesup undated letter, *Thomas S. Jesup Papers,* New York Public Library.
[74] Eisenhower, 92.
[75] Letter from Halifax newspaper, reprinted in Niles *Register* 7, (February 25, 1815), 410.

Jacob Hindman to withdraw back to camp, which he followed without question. With the Americans gone, the British were able to retake their position.[270]

Colonel Miller called the Battle of Lundy's Lane "one of the most desperately fought actions ever experienced in America."[271] The six-hour battle was the bloodiest of the entire war. Scott's wound was so severe, he never saw action for the rest of the war. British Generals Riall and Drummond were injured too, the former being captured. The United States suffered 860 killed, wounded, or missing and the British had 880 casualties. The Americans suffered more deaths because of the British cannon fire. Even though the British still held the field, the Americans were able to withdraw to safety, ending the battle in a draw.[272] The battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane were both crucial turning points for the United States Army. Scott's hard vigorous training demonstrated the Americans could defat a British force in open field battle at Chippawa. Lundy's Lane may have ended in a draw, but like the Battle of Monmouth in 1778, it showed the Americans could hold their own in tight situations. Overall, Scott's training camp in Albany paid off.

Another battle that demonstrated improvement in the American military system was in New York along Lake Champlain at Plattsburg. British General Sir George Prevost prepared for an invasion of New York after receiving reinforcements. A few of them were units from France and Spain after Napoleon's first abdication. Prevost wanted to avoid being cut off like General Burgoyne was in 1777 when he surrendered at Saratoga. Prevost put together an army of 10,000 men at Montreal and crossed the American border on August 31. He planned to march along the western side of Lake Champlain and destroy the American stronghold at Plattsburg to secure

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[76] Eisenhower, 93.
[77] Letter of James Miller, July 28, 1814, in Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier,* 1:105.
[78] Hickey, 190-91.

occupation of northern New York. Secretary of War Armstrong did not expect a major attack in the region, and so he left few troops to defend the area.[273]

The defense of the region was under Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, who had only 3,400 troops, many of them new recruits. Some urged him to retreat, but he refused saying, "The eyes of America are on us. Fortune favors the brave."[274] Macomb sent the militia as skirmishing parties to slow down the British, but they were quickly brushed aside. The general reported, "So undaunted… was the enemy that he never deployed in his whole march always pressing in columns."[275] The British arrived on the north shore of the Saranac River on September 6th with about 8,000 troops. Over the next five days, Prevost clashed with American troops in small skirmishes and waited for the British squadron to find the American squadron on Lake Champlain.[276]

Macomb used this time to strengthen his defenses and summon additional militia from New York and Vermont. Fortune soon favored the Americans. At the exact same time, the American squadron under Master Commandant Thomas Macdonough engaged and defeated the British squadron under Captain George Downie. A smaller land battle started during the naval engagement. In the morning of September 11th, Prevost sent 4,000 troops under Major General Frederick Robinson to find a ford across the river to threaten Macomb's rear. They lost valuable time searching for the ford and by the time they did, Downie's fleet had been defeated. Fearing for his supply lines, Prevost ordered his troops to withdraw back to Canada.[277]

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[79] Hickey, 196.
[80] General Orders of September 5, 1814, in Plattsburg *Republican,* Sept. 24, 1814.
[81] Macomb to SW, Sept. 15, 1814, in WD (M221), reel 64.
[82] Hickey, 197.
[83] Ibid, 198.

The fighting on land was small, but decisive. The British engaged with the militia as they moved out and even left of military stored behind. The retreat alienated Prevost from Wellington's Peninsular War veterans and created great consternation in Canada and England. Prevost was recalled to Britain to answer for is failed campaign, but died before he could even defend himself. The battle along Lake Champlain was the last major battle in the northern theater in 1814. Since neither side was able to claim any significant conquest and control of the Great Lakes was divided, the Canadian front was till a stalemate, even after two years.[278] The Canadian frontier may have been in a deadlock, but the American forces still stopped a British invasion of New York. With all the victories won since the fall of 1813, the United States Army was proving itself as a formidable fighting force, even if the war's progress remained unchanged.

Eighteen-fourteen proved a year of remarkable success for the United States, but it featured great blunders as well. With Napoleon defeated and exiled in the spring of 1814, Britain was able to divert all its forces to North America. This began with the British strengthening and extending its blockade of the American coast. This put a strong chokehold on the American economy, especially the seafaring New England region. American exports fell went from $61 million in 1811 to less than $7 million in 1814. American imports fell from $53 million to $13 million. The customs duties doubled at the beginning of the war, but without other sources of revenue this too fell quickly from $13 million to $6 million. Any other revenue fell from $14 million to $11 million.[279] The plummeting economy created a great panic across the country as the cost of war kept increasing.

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[84] Ibid, 199.
[85] Ibid, 200.

Things continued to get worse when the Royal Navy increased raiding in the New England and Chesapeake coasts. In New England the British raided towns, destroyed ships, and cut off trade routes. The Chesapeake received the worst of it. The British were furious over the raids by the Americans in Upper Canada and General Prevost asked Vice Admiral Alexander Cochrane to "assist in inflicting that measure of retaliation which shall deter the enemy from a repetition of similar outrages."[280] The British established a base on Tangier Island in early April. Cochrane followed Prevost's request and in July ordered his commanders to "destroy and lay waist such towns and districts upon the coast as you find assailable."[281] He did offer safety to towns who supplied him or pay him tribute. Congress approved the building of a small flotilla of shallow-draft barges and row galleys manned by Joshua Barney the previous winter, but Barney burned the ships in August to avoid its capture.

Along with the coastal raids and blockade, the British also invaded and occupied northern Maine. The British had their eyes on Maine because of its position in Canada and they sought a more direct overland trade route to Quebec. They believed an occupying Maine would push border negotiations in their favor.[282] The British first took Moose Island in Passamaquoddy Bay, which was claimed by both nations, but occupied by the U.S. The island fell with no resistance and the inhabitants were forced to swear an oath of allegiance to Britain or leave. The British next targeted a long stretch of the Maines coast. Sir John Sherbrooke undertook the task with orders to occupy "that part of the District of Maine which at present intercepts the communication between Halifax and Quebec."[283] To fulfill this, Rear Admiral Edward Griffith sent 2,500 men under Sherbrooke

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[86] CG to Cochrane, July 30, 1814, in Cruickshank, Niagara *Frontier*, 1:176-77.

[87] Cochrane to commanding officers, July 18, 1814.

[88] Hickey, 201.

[89] Quoted in Barry J. Lohnes, "A New Look at the Invasion of Eastern Maine, 1814," *Maine Historical Society Quarterly*, 15 (Summer 1975), 9.

to Castine in Penobscot Bay on September 1st. Castine was protected by a small garrison of forty men who fired half-a-dozen artillery rounds at the invaders before abandoning their position.

The British continued to move up the Penobscot River, meeting little resistance along the way. They occupied the river up to Bangor where they seized or destroyed many merchant vessels. They eventually occupied the town of Machinas, gaining control of over 100 miles of Maine's coast. The British seized all public property in the area and forced citizens to swear allegiance to the British crown or leave. Many of the citizens swore the oath, seeking trade with Canada and Britain and to escape Madison's government.[284] "At the striking of the flag, some huzzad, and others, men of influence, observed, 'Now we shall rid of the tax gathers. Now the dammed democrats will get it.'"[285] American leaders made plans to take back northeastern Maine but fell through due to the inability to find recruits. Because of this, much of Maine remained in British hands for the rest of war.

As the British raided the Chesapeake, the citizens in the area feared for the safety of Washington. Armstrong may have done better than Eustis at managing the war, but he still neglected to fortify the federal capital, leaving the city undefended. The citizens believed the city was not in any real danger since it had no military value. Their beliefs were proven wrong when the British landed 4,500 troops in Benedict, Maryland and began marching towards Washington. British General Robert Ross joined with Rear Admiral Sir George Cockburn at Upper Marlboro. Ross initially had cold feet about continuing, but Cockburn persuaded him to continue.[286] "Having

[90] Hickey, 202.
[91] Salem *Essex Register,* August 3, 1814.
[92] Hickey, 205.

advanced to within sixteen miles of Washington and ascertaining to force of the enemy to be such as might authorize an attempt at carrying his capital, I determined to make it."[287]

At this time, the capital hastily started to put up defenses. The commander of this effort was Brigadier General William Winder, who ordered most of the bridges destroyed. James Monroe volunteered as a scout, even getting too close to the British lines. Additional militia units were called up, but there was not enough to time to prepare them. 500 regulars under Lieutenant Colonel William Scott joined the defenses along with 600 sailors and marines and five artillery pieces. The American forces, estimating 6,000 total, made their stand at Bladensburg, Maryland, a small town about six miles outside Washington. They formed into three lines facing the eastern branch of the Potomac River. The third line was too far back to support the first two and Monroe redeployed the second line to where they could not support the first line. President Madison even came to watch the defenses, being the only sitting president to step foot on a battlefield.[288]

At about 1:00 pm on August 24, the British began to appear on the opposite side of the river, and they were not impressed with their foe. One British officer noted the Americans "seemed [like] country people, who would have been much more appropriately employed in attending to their agricultural occupations, than in standing, with their muskets in their hands." Another officer was unsure if they were even Americans. "Are these Yankees or are they our own seaman got somehow ahead of us."[289] Despite taking heavy casualties, the British crossed the river and began to outflank the Americans, who then fell back. Just at the British began attacking the second line, Winder ordered it to fall back also. Panic quickly overwhelmed the troops and the retreat turned

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[93] Robert Ross to SSWC, August 30, 1814, in London *Times.* Sept. 28, 1814.
[94] Hickey, 205.
[95] [George R. Gleig], A Subaltern in America, Comprising his Narrative of the Campaigns of the British Army…During the late war, (Philadelphia, 1833), 66-67.

into a route. The mass panic as men started to run away comically became known as the "Bladensburg Races." When the British troops reached the third American line, they were shredded with grapeshot. However, they quickly routed that line on their flank as well.[290] By 4 pm, the British had complete control of the battlefield. "The rapid flight of the enemy and his knowledge of the country, precluded the possibility of many prisoners being taken."[291] Ross rested his troops for a couple of hours before continuing his march. American casualties were around seventy compared to the British having 250. Many historians conclude had the U.S. had more disciplined troops at Bladensburg, they may have prevailed.[292]

With the Americans defeated and running for their lives, the road to the capital was wide open. Citizens scrambled to evacuate the city and Madison himself was evacuated west of Alexandria. One of the more famous scenes was Dolly Madison saving the life-size portrait of George Washington by ripping it from its frame. The British arrived in Washington later that evening and began setting fire to many of the public buildings, seeing it as retaliation for the Americans burning York. They first burned the capitol building, the War Department, and many others. When they reached the White House, the British officer noticed a dinner that was still on the table for the Madisons. They helped themselves to the food, then stacked the furniture and paper and set fire to the building.[293]

Rear Admiral Cockburn took great pleasure in the determination since he detested the Americans. "Cockburn was quite a mountebank, exhibiting in the streets a gross levity of manner, displaying sundry articles of trifling value of which he robbed [from] the President's house."[294]

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[96] Hickey, 206.

[97] Ross to SSWC, August 30, 1814, in London *Times*, Sept. 28, 1814.

[98] Hickey, 206.

[99] Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography,* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1990), 578.

[100] Washington *National Intelligencer,* August 30-31, 1814.

The fires were so big and bright, they could be seen for forty miles. The British let the city burn throughout the night and evacuated to Benedict on the 25th. After their departure, a violent storm came through the area and saved was left of the capital. Because of his neglect to prepare the city for defense, Secretary of War Armstrong resigned his position and Monroe filled the spot until a replacement was found. Madison also received a good amount of blame because of his mismanagement of the war.[295] The destruction of Washington DC was the lowest point of the crisis of 1814, and for a while it seemed the United States would lose the war.

Not long after burning Washington, the British set their sights on Baltimore. Baltimore was an ideal target because of its large port, proximity to the Chesapeake, and being a hotbed for Anglophobia. "I do not like to contemplate acenes of blood and destruction, but my heart is deeply interested in the coercion of these Baltimore heroes, who are perhaps the sot inveterate against us of all the Yankees."[296] Major General Samuel Smith of the Maryland militia, had been setting up defenses in Baltimore since early 1813. By late summer 1814, he had between 10-15,000 troops (mostly militia) and available men building earthworks in the area. The British sent Captain Sir Peter Parker to the eastern shore to create a diversion. When Parker learned about a militia camp near Georgetown he decided to engage. On August 31st, he landed 250 sailors and marines and marched to the militia encampment. The commander of the camp, Phillip Reed heard of what was coming and prepared to attack. Reed sent a company of rifleman to harass the British then fell back to the main line anchored by several field pieces. The militia fought surprisingly well and dealt serious casualties to the attackers.[297]

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[101] Ketcham, *James Madison,* 579-80.
[102] Edward Codrington to wife, September 10, 1814, in Bourchier, *Edward Codrington,* 1:320.
[103] Hickey, 209.

The Americans were about to retreat because of low ammunition when Parker was shot and killed, forcing the British to retreat. The Battle of Faulks Creek left forty British dead compared to three Americans. The victory had little strategic importance but was a rare instance of the militia standing its ground against British regulars. It also boosted American morale and deprived the British of good commander.[298] On September 12, the British landed a force of 5,000 troops and marched to Baltimore. They encountered heavy resistance at North Point, about five miles outside the city. General Smith sent 3,000 men under John Striker to engage the British troops. Striker's main objective was to stall the British long enough for Smith to finish his defenses. The British troops were led by General Ross who was killed by a sharpshooter as they moved forward. Colonel Arthur Brooke assumed command and ordered the British artillery to soften the American lines. He then ordered a frontal assault that forced the Americans to fall back. The Americans suffered 215 casualties and the British suffered 340. The British may have won the day, but they sustained heavy casualties while doing it, one of them a popular and competent commander.[299]

After the Battle of North Point, the British continued their march to Baltimore. Near the city, the Americans had a strong three-mile-wide earthworks on the eastern approach to the city. Early on September 13, 4,300 British troops began moving towards the northern end of the city. When the British began attacking the city's outer defenses, the Americans were defending their position with 100 cannons and 10,000 regulars. The defenses proved to be far stronger than the British anticipated, but they pressed on anyway. When the outer defenses were taken, the British moved onto the inner defenses which were even more fortified. The first attack failed, but the

[104] Ibid, 210.
[105] Ibid, 211.

British troops were able to overrun the American right flank. However, the defenses proved to be too strong, and General Brooke ordered to bombard the Americans with artillery rather than risk a frontal assault.[300]

Meanwhile, a British sleet of nineteen ships under the command of Admiral Cochrane moved into the entrance of Baltimore harbor. The only obstacle in his way was Fort McHenry. The fort was garrisoned by 1,000 men under Major George Armistead. The defenses included various cannon sizes and a line of merchant sunken merchant ships to block the harbor. The fort was bombarded for about twenty-five hours, with the British firing as many as 1,800 cannonballs. Cochrane also launched mortars and Congreve rockets to frighten off the defenders. Because of how well constructed the fort was, the damage was relatively light.[301] During the night, Cochrane sent a landing force in small boats to the western shore of the fort, hoping to divert General Smith's forces from Brookes main attack. This worked for about a half hour, but the Americans were able to hold them off. The Americans also returned accurate cannon fire to the British fleet, forcing them to resort to long range cannon fire.[302] By the morning of September 14, the American flag was still flying over the fort and the American troops showed no sign of surrender.

Fearing the possibility of reinforcements and being cut off from the rest of his fleet, Admiral Cochrane gave up the pursuit for Baltimore and ordered all British troops to return to the ships. The entire Battle of Baltimore ended with twenty-eight Americans dead and 163 wounded. The British suffered forty-five dead and 300 wounded. The victory at Baltimore ended British

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[106] Elting, 238-39.
[107] Ibid, 237-38.
[108] Ibid, 238.

efforts in controlling the Chesapeake and boosted American morale after the destruction of Washington.[303]

The war did not conclude until December 1814. Peace negotiations between the two nations began as early as 1813, but they remained in a deadlock as both sides tried to swing the negotiation more in their favor. Through the efforts John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, and James Bayard with the British council, both nations settled on the *status quo antebellum*, effectively ending the war and returning relations and territory to prewar conditions. The Treaty of Ghent was signed on Christmas Eve 1814, Britain ratified it a few days later, and the United States ratified it on February 16, 1815.[304] Even though the war ended in a draw, the United States was able to walk away with some confidence in their ability to defend themselves. The United States got another chance to prove themselves in the south, under the command of Old Hickory.

A British force was already on the way when negotiations began in earnest with the objection of taking New Orleans. After a short expedition in Florida, Andrew Jackson realized the vulnerability of the city and set out to prepare for its defenses. Before Jackson's arrival, the people of New Orleans were discontent with the previous commander, James Wilkinson, because of his squandering of public funds. When Jackson arrived in late November 1814, the sprits of the people were lifted. "His immediate and incessant attention to the defense of the country soon convinced all that he was the man the occasion demanded."[305] Having recently received a commission in the regular army as a Major General, Jackson immediately began defense works. After making a detailed study of the area, Jackson established garrisons in strategic locations and ordered all waterways from the gulf blocked. He also set up an intelligence network to stay up to date on

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[109] Ibid, 242-43.
[110] Borneman, 270.
[111] Letter from New Orleans, December 16, 1814, in Richmond *Enquirer.*

enemy movements. Jackson even issued a proclamation calling for all citizens to assist in defending the city. "Those who are not for us are against us and will be dealt with accordingly."[306] Jackson's actions engulfed the streets with cheers and enthusiasm that melted away any previous feelings of defeatism.

Next came the task of assembling an army. Louisiana Governor William Claiborne called up the militia and troops came in from all directions. General John Coffee marched 850 mounted Tennessee riflemen from Baton Rouge, covering 135 miles in three days. Jackson appealed to free black men in the area to fight for the Americans, although not without opposition from Claiborne. He even received help from Baratarian pirates under Jean Lafitte who offered their service[307]. Jackson was initially reluctant but came around because of their excellent artillery skills and knowledge of the land. While Jackson was preparing his defenses and assembling an army, the British were assembling around 10,000 troops in Jamaica. After Robert Ross's death, Major General Edward Packenham took command of the British forces. At the end of November, the British troops were assembled on boats and sent to the Gulf coast. The convoy reached Florida's coast on January 5. They then sailed to an area eighty miles northeast of New Orleans and made camp on December 13.[308]

Throughout the next few weeks Jackson and his troops engaged the British on different occasions. On December 14, Lieutenant Thomas Catesby Jones and his unit opposed a British assault at Lake Borgne. Although the British won the engagement, it still delayed their march and gave Jackson more time to prepare defenses. On December 23, Jackson led a night attack against

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[112] General Orders of December 16, 1814, in Niles *Register* 7, (Jan. 14, 1815).

[113] The British made him an offer to join their side. He pretended to accept, then joined the Americans, providing Jackson with valuable intelligence.

[114] Hickey, 216-17.

the British with the support of two ships at Villeres Plantation. At 7:30 that night, the U.S. sloop *Carolina* opened fire on the British camp. Shortly after, he led a charge against the camp that caught the British by surprise. After British reinforcements arrived, Jackson withdrew his troops and formed a new line. General Pakenham, unaware of his superior numbers, decided not to pursue the Americans. On December 28, Pakenham ordered his troops to attack the American line in two columns. After suffering intense fire from American troops and the sloop *Louisiana,* the British forces withdrew.[309]

After several more days of preparations and gathering reinforcements on both sides, the British began a frontal assault on New Orleans on January 8, 1815, with around 8,000 troops. Jackson had a massive breastwork that stretched perpendicular with the river in three lines. It was strongly entrenched at the Rodriquez canal which stretched from a swamp to the river with timber loop-holed earthworks for artillery. The Americans had about 5,700 troops manning the defenses around the city. Near the river the American right flank was held by a mix of regulars, militia, and volunteers under Colonel George Ross. This also included units of free Blacks under Major Pierre Lacoste. Jackson's right flank was also bolstered by the artillery of the Baratarian pirates, who quickly impressed Jackson with their fortifications.[310] Jackson also had fifty dragoons in reserve and eight artillery batteries along the Rodriquez canal. Overall, Jackson had about 4,000 troops dug along the canal. General Coffee manned the left flank with his battle-hardened troops from the Creek War.

The British began marching at daybreak with a thick fog that rolled in from the river. The British marched in three columns, with two moving towards the American left flank and one

[115] Ibid, 219.
[116] Borneman, 284.

moving towards the right. As the sun began to rise, the fog started to lift and within minutes the entire field over which the British were advancing was exposed.[311] Three of Jackson's artillery batteries opened fire and blew massive holes in the British columns. Despite the artillery barrage, the British troops kept advancing forward. The riflemen under General Carroll waited patiently for the enemy to approach and when they got within 200 yards the Americans delivered a massive eruption of musketry.[312]

When the British reached the canal at the base of the American breastworks, Pakenham rode up with the ladders needed to climb out of the ditch. He was wounded in the arm and had his horse shot from under him. He climbed onto the horse of his aide and continued to move his men forward. He ordered Colonel Robert Rennie's unit to attack the American right by the river and 93rd assisted him. When Rennie stormed the redoubt, his unit was able to break through. However, the 93rd was not there to help and the American right flank opened fire on Rennie's position where he was killed, and his men ran.[313] Meanwhile, General Keane marched his column towards Jackson's center. They moved to assist the British right column when they were bombarded with artillery and musket fire. In the mass chaos Pakenham was trying to organize the remainder of his army but was shot once again with grapeshot that killed his horse and wounded his leg. Another round hit his back, paralyzing, and eventually killing him. Shortly after, General Gibbs, the commander of the British right column was killed twenty yards from the American ramparts. General Keane was also fatally wounded in the neck and thigh and carried off the field.[314]

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[117] Ibid, 285.
[118] Hickey, 222.
[119] Elting, 306-7.
[120] Borneman, 289.

With the British columns collapsing and the senior generals dead, General John Lambert ordered the remaining men to withdraw and make up defenses. The British forces encamped near Mobile for another week, during which they learned of the peace treaty and sailed back to Jamaica.[315] Jackson stayed in New Orleans in the event of another British attack, but it never came. He did not learn about the peace treaty until the middle of February after President Madison and Congress ratified it. Even after the war was over, he kept the city under martial law.[316] The Battle of New Orleans was a resounding success for the fledgling United States. It was one of the most decisive victories of the war and in American history and Jackson rose to fame as a national hero. With the victory just after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, it helped the American perceive themselves as not only the victors of the battle, but the entire war. The victory also gave the army another example of it had improved itself. With the War of 1812 over, the Americans sought to integrate the lessons learned. The military staff realized major permanent changes needed implementation. The army never went back to its old "citizens army" policy of the Jefferson administration and applied reforms to the army that would last for decades.

[121] Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15.

[122] Hickey, 223.

Chapter Four: "Provide for the Common Defense:" Postwar Army Reforms

America barely survived its second war with Great Britain. The government's grievances may have been valid, but they grossly overestimated the young nation's capabilities and overall importance in world affairs. Just before hostilities broke out, Virginia Federalist Daniel Sheffey said, "We have considered ourselves of too much importance in the scale of nations. It had led us to great errors. Instead of yielding to circumstances which human power cannot control, we have imagined that our own destiny, and that of other nations, was in our hands, to be regulated as we thought proper."[317] After two-and-a-half years of fighting, the United States did not gain any British territory, but it did gain some respect from Europe. Most importantly, it gained fighting experience. James Madison said, "Experience has taught us that a certain preparation for war is not only indispensable to avert disasters in the onset but affords also that best security for the continuance of peace."[318]

The war produced many difficulties, the main one being the inability to raise an army. Madison's administration struggled because of the failure of previous administrations to implement the necessary militia reforms for which the Republicans pushed so hard. The army also was not a popular institution before the summer of 1814.[319] Army pay was mediocre compared to other occupations. The raises in 1813 helped recruit more soldiers, but it was still miniscule compared to other professions. Jefferson even commented saying it "was nonsense to talk about regulars [since they were] not to be had in a people so easy and happy at home as ours."[320] The

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[1] Speech of Daniel Sheffey, January 3, 1812, in AC, 12-1, 627.
[2] JM to Congress, February 18, 1815, in AC, 13-3, 255-56.
[3] Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War,* 504.
[4] Jefferson to Monroe, October 16, 1814, *Thomas Jefferson Papers*, LC.

poor training and discipline of the soldiers resulted in disastrous campaigns in the war's early months.

The army managed to turn itself around in the latter half of the war, but long-term solutions remained to be seen. During his last two years in office, President Madison began to advocate for Federalist military policies and Congress obliged. One of the changes was Madison's new Secretary of War, William H. Crawford, who helped with the early stages of military reform.[321] Madison and Crawford proposed a peacetime army increase to 20,000, but Congress settled on an increase to 12,000, increasing any peacetime American army tenfold. During the war, the Army General Staff was created to fix problems of command, organization, and logistical support. The General Staff was a group of bureaucratic departments such as the adjutant general, inspector general, and quartermaster general, with each bureau chief reporting directly to the Secretary of War.[322] An act was passed in April 1816, one of the first of its kind in the United States, that began formerly establishing this group, which made the positions more permanent and established pay.

As helpful as these reforms were, Madison spent his remaining months as president trying to fix the war shattered economy. His successor, James Monroe, and his Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, continued the programs of postwar reform. Calhoun was twenty-four years younger than Monroe, but he was one of the more vocal "War Hawks" in the House of Representatives. He also strongly supported Monroe's program to build up the country's defenses.[323] When Calhoun took the office it was very unpopular. Mismanagement during the war made it an undesirable and

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[5] Robert Allan Rutland, *The Presidency of James Madison*, (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1990), 190.

[6] Millet, Maslowski, Feis. *For the Common Defense*, 111.

[7] Harlow Giles Unger, *The Last Founding Father: James Monroe and a Nation's call to Greatness,* (New York: De Capo Press, 2010), 266-67.

unattractive position. Calhoun was up to the task of reforming the office to something that was respected. He wrote General Brown, "We have much indeed to do."[324]

Unlike other politicians, he did not come in seeking to undo what had been established. Calhoun knew his limitations, having read only one book on military affairs. However, he was willing to learn.[325] He spent over a month studying and developing a routine for the job. He listened to others and humbly questioned technical experts. With this, he drew up the information in a code of regulations praised by Congress. He made sure he worked well with the generals, while also humbly, and apologetically, pointing out mistakes. Calhoun knew very well the responsibility that lay before him.[326]

Calhoun learned the lessons of the late war well and was set to eradicate the problems of 1812. Even though the country was tired of war, he warned his countrymen "However remote our situation from the great powers of the world, and however pacific our policy, we are…liable to be involved in war, and, to resist, with success, its calamities and dangers, and a standing army in peace, in the present improved state of military science, is an indispensable preparation."[327] Calhoun learned that peacetime provided the best opportunity to build an army. It would provide time to raise and organize troops, set up defenses, and train soldiers to decrease disasters. Calhoun also made his argument clear for the purpose of a peacetime army:

> [The peacetime army] ought to be to create and perpetuate military skill and experience, so that, at all times, the country may have at its command a body of officers, sufficiently numerous and well instructed in every branch of duty, both of the line and staff; and the organization of the army ought to be such as to enable the Government, and the commencement of hostilities, to obtain a regular force,

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[8] Calhoun to Jacob Brown, July 29, 1818, *Brown Papers,* LC.

[9] Margaret Coit, *John C. Calhoun: American Portrait,* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1990), 120-21.

[10] Coit, *John C. Calhoun,* 121.

[11] Calhoun, report on "The Reduction of the army," Dec. 12, 1820, *Works*, 96.

> adequate to the emergencies of the country, properly organized and prepared for actual service.[328]

This may have set well with the young officers and men who just missed serving in the war, but Calhoun's arguments still did not persuade Congress, whose members were still on the fence about a standing military.

Some of the reform policies of Calhoun were geared toward the General Staff. Even after its establishment in 1813 and boost of momentum in 1816, decentralization issues continued. Calhoun sought to fix these issues. Taking advice from experienced officers, Calhoun started to concentrate all the operations of the General Staff in the federal capital, under the supervision of the War Department. At the beginning of Monroe's presidency, only three staff officers were in Washington: the inspector general, the paymaster general, and the chief of ordnance.[329] Calhoun improved the Corps of Engineers by fixing its headquarters and placed the six topographical engineers under the chief engineer. In April 1818, the War Department had Congress pass an act that added three more positions: a quartermaster general with the rank of brigadier general, a surgeon general, and a commissary general of subsistence charged with securing army rations. To fill these positions, Calhoun appointed the young and energetic veterans of the war and compiled them with certain codes and regulations in relation to their department. The new General Staff was headquartered in Washington and was responsible for managing the army's logistic and personnel administration.[330] The arrangement was completed by 1820 and had no major changes until the early twentieth century and implemented a new form of army administration the United States had not seen.

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[12] Calhoun, "Reduction."

[13] William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784-186,* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 120.

[14] Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms,* 120.

The new changes to the General Staff were very impressive, but the army soon faced an old problem. Under the impact of the economic panic of 1819, Congress sought budget cuts, and they looked to reducing the army's size by half, bringing it down to around 6,300. When the generals heard about this proposal, they were less than enthusiastic. Winfield Scott believed, given the extensiveness of the American coast and the vastness of the frontier, army reductions would endanger national security.[331] Jacob Brown wrote, "Military experience is too laborious and tedious of acquisition to be sacrificed without urgent necessity when once attained."[332] After taking advice from his generals, Calhoun proposed one of the most brilliant military plans in the early republic. He agreed to reduce the size of the army but keep the same number of units and officers by reducing the number of enlisted men in them. This way the army could be grow to war time status in times of crisis without the headache of reorganization. Calhoun termed it the "expansible" army.[333]

In times of war the units would be brought to strength by recruiting more privates who would then be trained by experienced officers.[334] Part of this also involved merging the light artillery and the Ordnance Department with the Corps of Artillery, keeping most officers, and reducing the numbers of enlisted personnel. The infantry regiments would similarly be reduced from seventy-six to thirty-seven soldiers per company. In times of war, the expanded companies collectively increase the army from 6,000 to 12,000, and even up to 20,000 like Madison originally hoped for.[335]

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[15] Brig. General Winfield Scott to Calhoun, August 20, 1820.
[16] Major General Jacob Brown to Calhoun, Oct. 6, 18120, Jacob J. Brown Papers, LC.
[17] Coit, 125.
[18] Millett, Malowski, and Feis, 112-113.
[19] Skelton, 128.

Another emphasis of these reforms was the use of regulars over the militia. After the war, men like Calhoun realized the use of the militia was not a good method for national defense. "This was a fool hardy error at the commencement of the late war, which cost the country so much treasure and blood."[336] The better trained and more disciplined regulars proved to be more effective in battle. Calhoun also improved the army structure by centralizing the high command structure to avoid commanders exceeding their authority. To that end, Calhoun appointed General Brown as the commanding general of the army. These new reforms, however, still had their issues. Secretaries did not stay in office for more than a few years and the different chiefs of the departments rarely worked together. Despite these setbacks, it was much better than before.[337] Unfortunately, Calhoun's "expansible" army was rejected by Congress, who reduced the army to around 6,100 by dismissing officers and regiments. The idea still lived on by those who believed regulars ought to be the foundation for planning war.

Along with politicians, the army generals were also helping with reform. As part of establishing the General Staff, the command structure was centralized to two major generals and four brigadiers. Jacob Brown and Andrew Jackson served as the major generals and Winfield Scott, Edmund P. Gaines, Alexander Macomb, and Eleazar Ripley served as the brigadiers.[338] Jackson commanded the Southern Division while Brown commanded the Northern Division, and the four brigadiers were assigned to different departments within those divisions.[339] General Brown helped with the reorganization as much as Calhoun did. Part of the 1820 reductions eliminated one of the brigadier positions and created the position of Commanding General of the

[20] Calhoun, "Reduction of the Army," 1820.
[21] Millett, Malowski, and Feis, 112.
[22] Eisenhower, *Agent of Destiny,* 103-105.
[23] Eisenhower, 110.

Army. Brown was the first to hold this position. Part of his job was to advise the secretary of war and president on military policy.

One of the things Brown did that impacted the army was the creation of a recruiting service in 1822. Previously, recruiting was done by each regiment in its own district. Brown, instead, started a recruiting system directed by Colonel William McRee for the entire army. The regiments sent two officers each, often a captain or lieutenant, on recruiting duty into the local populations. With this, new recruits could be sent to the units that needed them the most. The system was officially established in 1825 and has continued to be used ever since.[340]

Another influencer in post-war army reforms was Winfield Scott, the hero of Chippewa. Upon the war's conclusion, Scott served on a board of inquiry to demobilize the army and select the officer corps. Shortly after, Scott traveled to Europe to study warfare; however, by the time he arrived Napoleon had been defeated at Waterloo. He toured France and England, where he became acquainted with John Quincy Adams. In April 1816, Scott was ready to return home despite initially planning a three-year trip. He arrived in Baltimore on May 10, 1816. When he returned, he was assigned to command the Third Department in the Northern Division, whose region stretched from New York City to the Niagara River.[341]

Scott set up his headquarters in New York City, where peacetime made army life very quiet. During his tenure in New York, he earned the nickname "Old Fuss and Feathers" for his insistence on proper military bearing, appearance, and discipline.[342] When the 1820 reductions were made, Scott was able to keep his rank, but under the premise that he would move to St. Louis

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[24] John D. Morris, *Sword of the Border: Major General Jacob Jennings Brown, 1775-1828,* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2000), 235.

[25] Eisenhower, 105-108.

[26] Ibid, 184.

to command the Western Division. Part of this change split the army command between the Western Division headquartered in St. Louis and the Eastern Division in New York.[343] Scott accepted this but switched posts with General Gaines, wanting to stay in New York. They did establish a rotation schedule for every few years and corresponded regularly.

The biggest contribution Scott made in the post war years was the writing and publication of his own drill manual. Influenced heavily by the battle tactics of the Napoleonic Wars, Scott used these maneuvering drills at his training camp in Buffalo in 1814. He studied the British and French regiments while in Europe and Congress approved of the manual in 1820. Scott's manual comprehensively addressed details of discipline and administration. This included rank and command, military honors, dress codes, reports, organization of posts, and camp functions on campaigns. Staff department regulations, assembled by their respected chiefs, were also included, as were the articles of war.[344] Scott published a revised edition in 1835, and *Rules and Regulations* gave the United States Infantry uniformity in its training. This manual continued to be used by the army until the Civil War.[345]

Another general worth mentioning is Alexander Macomb, who was promoted to brigadier general for his victory at Plattsburg in 1814. During the reductions of 1820, Macomb was demoted to colonel and made the Chief of Engineers to fulfill the General Staff regulations Congress wanted. Macomb accepted the offer, but fortune soon proved to be in his favor. With the death of General Brown in 1828, Macomb was appointed as commanding general by President John Quincy Adams, who grew frustrated over the seniority quarrel between Scott and General Gaines.[346]

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[27] Ibid, 117.

[28] Winfield Scott, U.S. War Department, *Rules and Regulations for the field Exercise and Maneuvers of Infantry, compiled and adapted to the Organization of the Army of the United States,* (New York: T and W Mercin, 1815).

[29] Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott,* (New York: Sheldon Company, 1864), 258.

[30] Skelton, *American Profession of Arms,* 289.

Macomb's tenure as commanding general was labeled with uncertainty over the position. To fix this and secure his seniority, he added a provision in the 1834 regulations that the commanding general be given three stars over the two-star major-generals.[347] He also defined the relationship between the Secretary of War and the commanding general as well as establishing supremacy over the other department chiefs.[348] Macomb also pushed for a larger army, better pay for the enlisted ranks, relief for widows and orphans, and officer retirement and replacement plans, setting precedents for the future. General Scott succeeded Macomb as commanding general after his death in 1841 and held the position for about twenty years, being the longest serving general of the 19th century.[349] The generals from the War of 1812, who gained much experience and prestige during the conflict, played a major role in reshaping and reforming the army after the war. Their policies, codes, and regulations gave the army much needed uniformity and structure that it lacked before and during the war.

Another factor defining military professionalism is the adaptation to new and developing technology. As the Industrial Revolution took its early form in America, the United States Army took advantage of the new inventions. One of these inventions was the telegraph. Invented in 1844 by Samuel F. B. Morris, it revolutionized military communication. Instead of relying on message couriers, whose delivery time often depended on their speed, messages became virtually instantaneous.[350] This allowed the army to have faster and more efficient communication between the War Department and field commanders. They could strategize more effectively and keep up to date on posts and troop movements.

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[31] This was never actually implemented until the Civil War with the promotion of Ulysses S. Grant in 1864, being the first three star general since George Washington.

[32] Alexander Macomb, *Memoir of Alexander Macomb,* (New York: M'Elrath, Bangs and Co., 1833), 121-24.

[33] Eisenhower, 208.

[34] Millett, Malowski, and Feis, 113.

Another invention that changed military movements was the steam engine. The steam engine allowed for quicker travel both on land and in the water. In 1789, John Fitch built the first steamboat and in 1807, Robert Fulton began one of the first commercial transport operations. By the 1830s, steamboats were running up and down America's rivers. Without the reliance of wind or currents, steamboats allowed troops to move at significantly faster rates than marching overland. The only things that hindered their abilities were low water levels, ice, and river directions. Railroads provided a bigger advantage. Weather and direction did not stop them; they essentially went anywhere builders could lay down tracks. This also allowed for faster travel to further distances. Troops could board the train, arrive at a station in a different area, and march to their posts. By 1860, the United States had about 30,000 miles of tracks. These inventions made travel faster and much cheaper.[351]

The innovation of firepower also developed after the war. The development of fulminates in the 1790s replaced the faulty flintlock system for infantry weapons. In 1820, Joshua Shaw perfected a percussion cap that contained mercuric fulminate. The soldier would place the cap on a cone in front of the hammer known as the nipple. When fired, the hammer would hit the cap and release the chemicals that would ignite the gun powder in the barrel.[352] This made the weapon more reliable and improved the rate of fire. Rifles were also improved after the war. Early rifles fired round lead balls with a smaller caliber. For them to be used effectively, the balls had to be jammed in the barrel compared to a smoothbore. Years after the war, an elongated cylinder-conoidal bullet was made by French captain Claude E. Minié. The "Minie Ball" slipped into the

[35] Ibid, 114.

[36] "The Early History of the Copper Percussion Cap," *Joshua Shaw, Artist and Inventor*, 2012, accessed March 29, 2024, https://web.archive.org/web/20120218221926/http://www.researchpress.co.uk/firearms/ignition/shaw02.htm.

barrel very easily and had a hollow base that expanded with the powder charge, causing it to grip the rifling. This stabilized the bullet's spin for better external ballistics, which improved range and accuracy tenfold.[353]

By the 1850s, percussion cap rifles using the "Minie Ball" became the standard firearm for the American infantry. Breechloading guns were also invented in the years following the War of 1812, but they saw limited use because they took longer to make and were often more expensive. They still played a significant role in military development as the Industrial Revolution continued. Artillery had minor changes to their design, although many cannons were rifled to improve accuracy and range. With the advancement in infantry weapons, artillery served a different role instead of blasting the enemy. They were moved further away from enemy lines to prevent mass butchery.[354] These new innovations took place over decades after the War of 1812 ended. They may not have had a direct impact on the years immediately after the war, but the army's willingness to adapt and use the latest technology kept it current with military affairs. Such adaptation helped insure the army against defeat at the hands of superior forces with the same weapons in a potential future conflict. Adapting to new technology has always been a staple in military professionalism.

Something else that developed after the War of 1812 was the need for military schools to train and educate the nation's new generation of officers. One of the biggest changes was the American perception of the United States Military Academy (West Point). Even though West Point was founded during Jefferson's administration, the academy barely survived the war. The school received very few new cadets and had little curriculum with which to work. An act was passed in 1812 with a provision limiting admissions ages to between fourteen and twenty-one. During the

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[37] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 474.

[38] Millett, Malowski, and Feis, 115.

war, however, the law was not enforced by the War Department and the cadets had a wide range in age and education. Since there was little to no curriculum, and no academic calendar, cadets tended to arrive sporadically and graduate anywhere between three months and five years. The faculty often clashed with Captain Alden Partridge, the academy's superintendent from 1815-1817. Partridge saw the school as a military institution while many of the civilian faculty hoped to turn it into a scientific research facility. In 1816, The faculty charged Partridge with misconduct because of his dogmatic personality and Partridge responded by placing the academic staff under military arrest.[355]

After a visit form President James Monroe in 1817, Partridge was relieved and replaced by Captain Sylvanus Thayer. Calhoun had better luck here than with his "expansible army." With Calhoun's and Thayer's help, West Point was completely changed. Prospective cadets were given a thorough screening through a personal interview with the Secretary of War. Calhoun's standards were also exceedingly high. In 1825, nine Virginians were chosen out of thirty-five, one being Robert E. Lee. Things were not always smooth sailing at the academy. In 1819, a protest broke out, and Thayer expelled the cadets to took part and labeled the rebellious committee as "mutinous." Calhoun, however, had a higher tolerance for the youth and deemed "youth and inexperience" as a cause for the act. After some time, Calhoun convinced Thayer to "restore" the expelled cadets.[356]

Thayer was also able to reform the curriculum. After the war, Thayer went to France where he studied the Napoleonic military education system, particularly the organization and curriculum of the *Ecole Polytechnique*. The curriculum included courses in mathematics, engineering, infantry

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[39] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point,* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1966), 38-61.

[40] Calhoun to Sylvanus Thayer, January 29, 1819, *War Office*, Military Book, IX.

tactics, artillery studies, French, and various sciences. During his sixteen years as superintendent, with support from the War Department, Thayer was able to create the Military Academy's distinct character that it has to this day.[357] Thayer was also able to introduce uniform procedures. In 1818, the War Department approved new regulations to change the school's structure. The superintendent was the academy's commander and he answered only to the Secretary of War. Faculty, school officers, and cadets were subject to his orders. New cadets had to report for entrance examination the same time every year. They also had to begin their studies as a unified class every fall. No cadet could receive an officer's commission until they completed all their course work in a four-year time frame. These regulations created inspection procedures that made the chief of engineer the academy's inspector. They also created a board of visitors "versed in military and other sciences," to attend the exams and report on the school's operations.[358]

Calhoun and Thayer were able to shape the academy to prestige military standards. Calhoun saw it as a chance to fix past mistakes. He regularly read and suggested books for the classrooms. He urged for talent to be drawn by paying faculty based on qualifications instead of rank.[359] One faculty that is worth noting is Dennis Hart Mahan. Mahan was a West Point graduate from the class of 1824. He graduated with such high prestige that he was immediately offered a faculty position for the Corps of Engineering. In the late 1820s, he traveled to Europe where he studied at the French Artillery School in Metz. Upon his return to the academy, he began implementing what he learned. Some of these theories included the use of combining artillery, infantry, and cavalry in concert to attack an enemy's decisive point.[360] He advocated for tactics

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[41] Skelton, 123.

[42] "Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Military Academy at West Point," ASP: MA, 2:77-79.

[43] Coit, *John C. Calhoun: American Portrait,* 130

[44] Michael Bonura, "French Lessons at West Point: How Napoleonic strategy and tactics influenced generations of American officers." *HistoryNet.com*. Oct. 1, 2014, accessed April 9, 2024. https://www.historynet.com/french-lessons-west-point/?f

like these to have a flexible and practical approach in relations to the differences between North American and European geography. Mahan was also a strong advocate for a strong professional army. He also pushed for hard disciplined training on the militia and volunteers to improve their performance in battle. Mahan's writing and lectures on warfare were incredibly influential and were used in American battle tactics as late as World War II.[361]

The new success of West Point was influential in the establishment of other military academies. General Brown played a crucial role in establishing two postgraduate schools. The first was the Artillery School of Practice at Fort Monroe in Virginia. The idea for such an institution was first introduced in 1818 but was never able to obtain much traction. In 1823, while Calhoun was pondering the idea, Brown believed a "scientific course of practice" was needed to confirm the "almost purely" theoretical teachings of West Point. The School of Practice would be able to preserve discipline, improve knowledge of science, and assist "the extension of its [the army's] character."[362]

Brown declared extensive military education was the "only great improvement" for the army's character and respectability during peacetime. He said the first function of the army during peacetime was to "prepare a body of science and practice in artillery." He explained that forts and walls could be replaced, but the "waste of science and discipline" would take too long to replace. He urged West Point graduates commissioned in artillery to spend two years at the new school.[363] The Artillery School of Practice was established in 1824 and gained its own code of regulations in December that year.

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Brown to Calhoun, March 21, 1823, BP-LOC.
[47] Brown to Calhoun, April 2, 1824, BP-LOC.

The regulation codes for the Artillery School of Practice called for eleven companies and their officers to study and teach math, engineering, chemistry, and military drawing. All students spent two years at the new school and two months were specifically dedicated to field practices. Even though the school never received the full staff required and lacked funding from Congress, the commanders still worked with the curriculum as best as they could.[364] After its establishment at Fort Monroe, Brown reported to the secretary of war that it was diminishing past mistakes in the army. He also believed it gave the army advantages in troops concentration. The school had a major influence on the new students regarding "the incipient formation of their ideas and character."[365] Brown continued to see the benefits for the Artillery School of Practice on soldiers by preserving their eagerness to fight and protecting troops from "approaches of imbecility."[366] Brown also established a rotation system for the different units to go in and out of the School of Practice. In 1825, Brown introduced a two-year rotation system believing if units stayed in one post for too long, they would lose "vigor and enterprise" and had a "disinterested devotion to duty." He also believed such a system would "correct sectional prejudices."[367] The idea was quickly approved by the secretary of war, much to Brown's delight.

The Artillery School of Practice produced better training and military knowledge and Brown supported the school until his death. Brown showed so much devotion that he urged for another one to be established for the infantry. In 1825, he pushed for a post for the infantry ten miles south of St. Louis in Belle Fontaine, Missouri to keep the frontier under control. He also believed St. Louis provided a great base to access the Missouri and Mississippi River complex.

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[48] Regulations establishing the Artillery School of Practice, December 2, 1824, M221, reel 99.
[49] Annual report to Secretary of War, November 30, 1826, BP-LOC.
[50]Annual report to Secretary of War, November, 1, 1827, BP-LOC.
[51] Brown to SW, October 5, 1825, with endorsements, M221, reel 101.

Brown also thought that placing "moderate" forces between settlers and Indians, the frontier would be secure, and reinforcements would come from the efficient and disciplined forces of the academy in Belle Fontaine. Such a school for the infantry would produce better officers and extinguish "the rest of inactivity and oblivion."[368]

Orders for the construction of buildings were issued in July 1826 for the Infantry School of Practice. In his annual report to the Secretary of War in 1827, Brown pointed out the advantages for the concentration of the infantry and a movement against the Winnebago Indians provided a great illustration for them too.[369] The school in Missouri, commonly called the Jefferson Barracks, saw some success but never gained the same traction as West Point. By the 1830s, the garrison was reduced by half, and by the 1850s functioned on an informal basis. The artillery school met a similar fate. Both were still the first post graduate schools for the U.S. Army and were the direct predecessor for the service schools founded in the 1880s.[370]

More schools emerged in the following years, especially in the south, but they did not last longer than a few years. Some schools were formed for military purposes but grew into institutions with broader objectives. The two best examples are the Virginia Military Institute (V.M.I.) in Lexington, Virginia and the Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina. V.M.I. and the Citadel were founded and funded by their own states to answer the call to provide quality military training while also serving as posts to guard the state arsenals.[371] This method also satisfied economic demands, the worries of parents of misbehaving boys, and the need for more educational facilities. Most of the schools adapted their regulations, instructions, and even their uniforms from those of West

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[52] Brown to SW, December 2, 1825, M221, reel 101

[53] Brown to Barbour, November 1, 1827, BP-LOC.

[54] Morris, *Sword of the Border,* 239.

[55] Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865,* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company), 76.

Point. Many professors at these places like William T. Sherman at the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson at V.M.I. were West Point graduates.[372] These schools also continued the Jeffersonian ideal of the "citizen soldier." The graduates were not committed to the regular army like those at West Point, but they had better training than the traditional militia. These schools provide many of the states, especially in the south, with the fighting men they believed necessary to hold the frontier, repel invaders, and subdue slave revolts.

In the years after the War of 1812, the army was reformed and repurposed to be a formidable fighting force. Calhoun's policies helped reorganize the General Staff to end the confusion of communication, orders, and command. His policies of troop organization made them easier to assemble and his "expansible" army inspired future generals. The new generals from the war provided new things for the army including recruiting, drill instructions, and ties with the War Department that lasted for decades and even centuries. The adaptation to new technology provided the army access to inventions and innovations to make communication and movement faster and battle tactics more effective. The new schools and academies trained and created future generations of officers to avoid the blunders of 1812. In the years immediately after the war, the army's main objective was to hold down the frontier and assist in the removal of Indians east of the Mississippi River. These new reforms and training changed the United States Army into a new molded force that could rival those of Europe. These reforms and policies really helped the army in its next war in the 1840s against Mexico.

[56] Ibid.

Conclusion: The Legacy of 1812

When the Treaty of Ghent was ratified by the U.S. Congress on February 16, 1814, the American public rejoiced at the war's end. Two days later, James Madison presented a message to Congress saying the war was "a necessary resort to assert the right and independence of the nation. It has been waged with a success which is the natural result of the wisdom of the legislative councils, of the patriotism of the people…and the valor of the military and naval forces of the country."[373] This is a great summary of how the Americans wrote off the war upon its conclusion. With the spectacular victory at New Orleans, popular opinion viewed the war as an American victory. Republicans declared the war was not only an American triumph but a "second war of independence." The war was the final nail in the coffin for the Federalist Party, which ceased to be a national party by 1816. The war also helped launch the political careers of a few of the major leaders. Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison were both elected president years later, riding on their reputations as war heroes. As time went on, amnesia set into public minds and memories of the war started to fade away.[374]

Memories of the war were brought back by historians like Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Adams, and even Woodrow Wilson. Adams's account of the Jefferson and Madison administrations helped solidify the view of the war throughout the twentieth century. His view was the war was a grave and futile miscalculation brought on by a weak president.[375] Woodrow Wilson in his *History of the American People* was even critical of the American government for getting

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[1] James Madison message to Congress on Peace Treaty, February 18, 1815, in *Madison Writings,* (New York: Library of America, 1999), 707-708.

[2] Budiansky, *Perilous Fight,* 256.

[3] Henry Adams, *The History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.* Vol. II. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889-91), 300.

themselves into the war. "It was a foolhardy and reckless risk the Congress was taking."[376] Wilson even explained how America was wrong to think of Britain as their enemy and that Napoleon was the real threat. He also criticized the nation's lack of preparedness before the war. "The government had neither the means nor the organization to conduct it."[377] Wilson did give credit to the American forces for the way they performed at places like Baltimore, New Orleans, and Lake Erie. When the war ended, he noted how the country was able to tame its war fever. "This clumsy, foolhardy, and haphazard war had at any rate broken that temper. The country had regained its self-respect. The government of the union, moreover, was once more organized for rational action."[378] This was the main perception of the war throughout the twentieth century, but historians noticed the lasting changes it brought. These changes were crucial in reforming the army.

Before the war, the United States Army was ravaged by the first American party system. The Federalists wanted to keep the professional army the country gained from the Revolution. The Jeffersonian Republicans continued the prejudice towards a standing army and wanted to use the militia as the nation's first line of defense. The difference in these policies hindered the army's ability to grow, organize itself, and develop uniform procedures to train and have logistical support. The army did prove itself as a formidable force on the frontier during Washington's presidency with decisive victories at places like Fallen Timbers. However, it was not enough to sway the Republicans who believed the militia and settlers could also fight off the Indians. John Adams continued the policies of the Washington administration, but his unpopularity proved too much for the Federalists. Thomas Jefferson and the Republicans dominated American politics and

[4] Woodrow Wilson, *History of the American People,* Vol. 3, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1900), 214.

[5] Wilson, *History of the American People,* 218.

[6] Ibid, 229.

military policies for twelve years until the war broke out. Even as Britain armed Native Americans and impressed American sailors, Republicans still urged for the "citizen soldiers" When war did break out, the army found itself unprepared for any military action.

This showed itself in the early months of the war. The politicians in Washington were very overconfident in the nation's ability to wage war against Great Britain. The common perception that the army would be able to just march across Canada and easily take key cities was proven wrong when the army was unable to recruit and mobilize when planned. General Henry Dearborn's three-pronged offensive began at separate times and none of them prevailed. The militia also proved itself to be unreliable with their tendency to run away in the heat of battle and refusing leave their own states. The defeats of Generals Hull and Rensselaer left the northwest territory open to invasion and Dearborn's incompetence in failing to attack Montreal proved the current system for the army was not working. The nation also learned appointing generals for their political affiliations was a flawed system because it did not translate to good fighters.

The army started to turn itself around during 1813. The occupation of York boosted American morale, however the looting and burning of the city would later haunt the Americans in 1814. The victories of William Henry Harrison and Andrew Jackson over the different Indian coalitions secured the frontier from any more major native resistance east of the Mississippi River. Jackson's aggressiveness molded him into a figure of American legend and his troops always rallied behind him. Winfield Scott transformed the army with a new training camp he set up in Buffalo. His hard, disciplined, and uniformed nature of training turned the U.S. Army into a more professional force. This training translated itself onto the battlefield very well at the Battle of Chippewa. The uniform movement and the disciplined nature of the American troops impressed

their opponents with British General Riall shouting, "Those are regulars, by God."[379] The battle was a great victory for the Americans. Scott and his men proved themselves again at the Battle of Lundy's Lane. The battle may have ended in a draw, but both engagements proved American troops could hold their own against the British army. Alexander Macomb and his troops also proved themselves at the Battle of Plattsburg where they and the fleet on Lake Champlain decisively defeated the British and stopped an invasion of New York.

The United States also suffered great calamities in the second half of the war. The British invaded and occupied Maine, raided and looted the American coast, and the United States' economy was crumbling. The Americans suffered one of their worst defeats ever at the Battle of Bladensburg. The defeat left the road to Washington DC wide open, and the British burned the capital, mostly out of retaliation for the destruction of York. The Americans were able to bounce back with their victory at Baltimore, which also occurred a few days after the Battle of Plattsburg. They certainly proved themselves at the Battle of New Orleans, where a British force was decisively defeated. During this period, the American and British diplomats negotiated and signed the Treaty of Ghent, ending the war under the *status quo antebellum.*

The war had a significant impact on the United States, especially the army. Policies under President James Monroe and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun reformed the army in ways it had never previously scene. Calhoun's "expansible" army may have been rejected by Congress, but it lived on in the ideas of the generals. The new General Staff improved the efficiency of the army and fixed some of the logistical issues from the beginning of the war.[380] The generals also added their own contributions, particularly Winfield Scott's drill manual. His manual gave the army

[7] Hickey, 188.
[8] Ibid, 310.

uniform training procedures that it desperately needed to win battles against European armies. The adaptation to new technology provided the army with the newest technology of the time and innovative new battle tactics. The reforms made at West Point turned the academy into a well-respected military institution that trained the next generations of Americans officers. This also inspired more military schools to form in the South and even in the West. The post war reforms were crucial in reforming the army into a professional fighting force thanks to the lesson learned from the War of 1812.

The legacy of the War of 1812 is often overlooked in modern American eyes. The war gave the United States the respect of European nations like France and Britain. The defeat of the Native Americans tribes east of the Mississippi River allowed American expansion to continue without any major resistance. The war also started a period of American nationalism, which helped the people write the war off as a complete triumph. The biggest impact the war had was on the army. In less than three years, the army went from being a small, ragged force of amateurs to a large professional force that managed to beat back the British on more than one occasion. The War of 1812 also gave America her national anthem after the defense of Fort McHenry when Francis Scott Key wrote a poem about the American victory.[381] The nation was also moving past the idea of using the militia as its primary means of national defense.

The war by far had the biggest impact on the American military system. The United States grew and professionalized the army and navy after the war to protect its interests and fight off aggressors. These reforms had the most significant impact on the army. These reforms proved how well they worked when the nation fought against Mexico from 1846-48. The army was ready to mobilize, the command structure was organized, there was no noticeable strife between the

[9] Ibid, 211-213.

commanders, and the means of obtaining supplies had no problems. Winfield Scott continued to rise as a national hero in this conflict and many West Point graduates gained their first experience there. Many of these generals later fought against each other in the Civil War. Regardless of the future wars the army fought, its first taste of professionalism after the Revolution came from this conflict. If the War of 1812 never happened, the process of professionalizing the army may have taken much longer than it did. The lessons from the War of 1812 left a great impact on the army that carried it through much of the nineteenth century. Therefore, the War of 1812 was the event where the United States army began a change in policies towards army professionalization.

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